

THE
CHILD
OF
MISFORTUNE;
OR

The HISTORY of Mrs. GILBERT.

By Mr. THISTLETHWAITE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

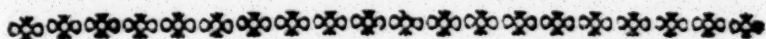
D U B L I N :

PRINTED FOR S. PRICE, W. WATSON, W. WHITE-
STONE, R. CROSS, J. POTTS, J. HOEY, J. WIL-
LIAMS, W. COLLES, T. ARMITAGE,
T. WALKER, G. BURNET, P. WOGAN,
E. CROSS, C. JENKIN, J. HILLARY,
P. HIGLEY, J. EXSHAW, AND
BEATTY, AND JACKSON.

—————
M, D CC, LXXVII.



THE
CHILD
OF
MISFORTUNE.



CHAP. I.

An early Visit. Description of two Strangers. An unexpected Discovery. A Family Altercation. A Reconciliation, and an Adventure, by which Mrs. Gilbert discovers a near Relation.

THE morning was considerably advanced before Mrs. Gilbert awoke. Mr. Lloyd who was himself an early riser, gave positive orders* that she should upon no pretence whatever be disturbed, availing himself of that opportunity to pay a visit to the gentlemen said to have been robbed, for the purpose of hearing from their own mouths the particulars of a circumstance which had been the means of introducing him to the acquaintance of our heroine, and upon a confirmation of which depended in a great measure her future peace and happiness.

Having reached the inn where he was informed he might hear of the persons of whom he was in

4 THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

search, he sent up his name, and desired the favour of an audience. The gentlemen were no sooner apprized of his request than they were disposed to gratify it.

The one was an elderly personage, venerable in his appearance, and courteous in his behaviour: health and temperance had given his cheeks a bloom which seemed to bid defiance to the power of time: his eyes still possessed the fire of youth, and his countenance was fraught with that placid serenity which proclaimed a heart unknown to vice, and a mind unacquainted with deceit.

The other was a youth, and appeared to be his son: he was of a delicate form, and his hair hanging in natural ringlets down his back, gave an additional grace to his appearance, such as put fashion to the blush and mocked the uncourtly efforts of modern ingenuity.

Mr. Lloyd having acquainted them with the cause of his visit, desired to be informed of the nature of the robbery, with the commission of which the manager and his friend stood charged.

The intelligence communicated to him in reply to this request, was such as tended to confirm him in his opinion of the criminality of the persons suspected, and of the truth of the relation he had before been favoured with.

Despairing of meeting with a single circumstance which might tend to palliate their guilt, he prepared himself to return home, when the oldest of the two gentlemen gently detaining him, by laying hold of the skirt of his coat, begged he would oblige them with his company to breakfast.

After the trouble Mr. Lloyd had given them, he could not refuse them a request so extremely moderate, and which only served to present him with a fresh proof of the politeness and civility of the person who addressed him.

Whilst

Whilst breakfast was preparing the kind inviter looking steadfastly at Mr. Lloyd, whilst the tears stood quivering in his eyes, addressed him with a kind of a tremulous accent thus :

“ I once, Sir, knew a lady of your— name the
“ most worthy and valuable of her sex—to attempt
“ her praise would be a task infinitely surpassing my
“ slender capacity—no! no! my Fanny’s excellencies
“ would alone suit the tongue of those heavenly choirs
“ with whom she is gone to partake of bliss!” —

“ Fanny! Fanny!” Exclaimed Mr. Lloyd, interrupting him—“ pray, Sir, is not your name Clayton?”

“ It is, Sir,” replied the stranger, “ and by the
“ question I can conjecture you to be no other than
“ the brother of Fanny — and of whom I was in
“ search.”

“ Yes, Sir,” answered Mr. Lloyd, “ I am indeed,
“ that unfortunate man — unfortunate only by her
“ imprudence and your villany. The honour of a
“ sister, Mr. Clayton, is no inconsiderable matter.—
“ By her seduction (for I can give it a name nothing
“ more favourable) you have disgraced an ancient
“ and respectable family ;—you have extended the
“ veil of shame over the mossy tombs of her ancestors ;— you have fixed and indelible stain, obscuring the glories of an illustrious line ; and you have racked a brother’s breast with mourning the downfall and overthrow of a sister’s honour.”

“ Her honour, Sir!” explained Mr. Clayton amazed—“ by the immortal Searcher of hearts, it is as pure and unsullied as the shrine of Diana.”—

“ Was she not a prostitute — a whore?!”

“ A whore!—what my Fanny a whore!” replied the gentleman angrily—“ it is well, Mr. Lloyd —“ it is well, Sir, you are her brother.—

“ But I forgive you.—Dear injured shade!”

6 THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

“ (continued he, clasping his hands in each other)
 “ if it is permitted to thee to know what passes with mortals; if thy pure nature can hold communion with gross animal essence, vindicate thyself, and teach a harsh brother how greatly he misconceives the virtues of thy soul and the beauty of thy actions!”

“ Give me then, Sir,” said Mr. Lloyd, some proof stronger than words, whereby I may have sufficient reason to correct my suspicion. Convince me only that she was not deserving of the ungrateful appellation which I this minute bestowed upon her, and I shall have cause to bless your charity.”

“ She was my wife!” answered Mr. Clayton—will *that*, Sir, dispose you to be favourable to her memory?—she was my lawful and wedded wife! the most incontrovertible proofs of which I have here with me ready for your inspection. — Will these satisfy you?”

“ I am already satisfied,” replied Mr. Lloyd, and I beg your pardon, Sir, for any expression my warmth may have occasioned. A man tenacious of the honour of his family; a man susceptible of resentment, and impressed with an idea that he was conversing with him who has been the original cause of the fancied disgrace which has surrounded his house, may be allowed some indulgence to his feelings. Taught to consider you, Sir, in the light of my most bitter enemy, it is but natural to suppose that your presence must have filled me with disagreeable apprehensions. I am, however, not obstinately blind to conviction; I am endued with a sufficiency of forgiveness, amply to counterbalance for the warmth of instant passion, and I am happy in having an opportunity of seeing and being convinced of an
 “ error,

“error, which, as it has been the greatest misfortune of my life to imbibe, will consequently be the happiest part of my wish to correct.”

Breakfast by this time being brought upon table, a short truce was observed on both sides, which, however, was no sooner concluded than Mr. Lloyd gave them an invitation to attend him home. This Mr. Clayton could not refuse to his solicitations, had he even been so disposed ;—as it was, he made not the least hesitation to obey him, and in a few minutes they all together proceeded towards the antiquated mansion to which they were invited.

They had not proceeded many yards before they were overtaken by Mr. Ephraim Codex, the worthy curate, with the character of whom the reader has been made acquainted in the former part of these sheets.

Mr. Lloyd, who was always glad to see a man the sincerity of whose friendship he had so frequently experienced, was particularly careful in his enquiries after the health of his wife, whom he held in a similar degree of estimation with her husband.

The curate informed him that she was *purely* recovered from her late indisposition, and that he doubted not, *under God*, of fully perfecting her health in a little time, without the danger of a relapse.

Having made Mr. Clayton and the other gentleman acquainted with the curate's character and abilities, Mr. Lloyd desired the latter to accompany them to his house, where they presently arrived, and welcomed at the door by Mrs. Gwynn, who no sooner fixed her eyes on Mr. Clayton, than she knew him in spite of an interval of near thirty years, and the alterations his countenance had undergone by the difference of climates and the accidents of time.

8 THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

Surprized at a circumstance so strange and unexpected, she imparted her astonishment to Mr. Lloyd, who gave her to understand in a few words, the whole of the accident by which he arrived at the knowledge of Mr. Clayton, and the conversation that adventure had given birth to.

The worthy domestic was no less pleased than surprized at what she heard. She had known Mr. Clayton from his childhood, and was happy in the likelihood there appeared of effecting a reconciliation between that gentleman and her master, who were so long supposed to be the inveterate enemies to each other, and whom she had so equal an esteem for, that it would be impossible to tell who most possessed her regard.

“ Mrs. Gilbert had not yet quitted her apartment : in a few minutes, however, she came down stairs blushing like the morn. Her entrance, suddenly and involuntarily attracted the eyes of all present, particularly those of Mr. Clayton, who beheld her with a mixture of love, joy, and admiration.

The moment Mrs. Gilbert perceived him, she found herself agitated in a manner to which she was a stranger : she saw in him a person with whom she had long been acquainted, yet would not her recollection serve a while to remind her, when, or where she had seen him. She retraced in memory all the different events of her life, yet without effect, and labouring with curiosity and anxiety, she was nearly despairing of her hopes, when, like a flash of lightning bursting upon her soul, she was enabled to unriddle the mystery which had given her so much perplexity, and to ascertain the identity of him who had so much employed her attention.

Mr. Clayton was no other than the gentleman who attended Miss Wilmot at the time our heroine first visited the metropolis, and who then went by the appellation of Gandon.

“ Did

“ Did you not once know a Miss Wilmot, Sir ?”
—said Mrs. Gilbert.

Amazed at this question, Mr. Clayton surveyed her again from head to foot.—“ No !”—said he softly to himself,—“ it cannot be ! that were an happiness to great !”—

“ Do you not know me, Sir ?”—continued she,
—“ have you then indeed forgot your Louisa ?”

“ Gracious Heaven !”—exclaimed he, —“ by
“ what wonderful ways dost thou contrive to shew
“ thy goodness !—It is too much ! O my daughter !
“ my daughter !”—

He could say no more, — but instantly fainted away.—

With the assistance of Mr. Lloyd and the curate he was however presently restored to himself.

“ Where is she ?—Where is she ?”—said he,—
“ let me once more behold her.—Yes !—it can be
“ no other than my long lost daughter,—my Louisa !
“ O happiness too great and exquisite ! I see in her
“ all the softness and delicacy of her mother ; the
“ heavenly smile ; the enchanting grace ; the winning
“ sweetness, and the grandeur and dignity of be-
“ haviour which so eminently distinguished her a-
“ bove the daughters of the earth.—I see in her that
“ chastity of sentiment which banishes every gross
“ and low idea and raises the soul almost upon an
“ equality with the Deity.—She is—she is indeed
“ my daughter !”

When the violence of his transports was somewhat abated, Mrs. Gilbert presented him with the heads of her history, which he attended to with the greatest care, and heard her to the end without interruption.

“ Alas ! my child,” said he, when she had finished her narration, “ thou hast tasted deeply of the cup
“ of misery, but thou shalt no more drink thereof

" Thou hast cruelly felt the scourge of affliction,
 " but it shall never more be lifted against thee. Thy
 " father shall protect thee against the powers of ma-
 " lice and against the hand of misfortune. In his
 " love and in his affection shalt thou find an asylum
 " from thine enemies and a retreat from thy suf-
 " ferings.

" Nor think I mean by this retirement to sequester
 " thee from all communication with the world.
 " No—Behold in this youth a brother!—he shall
 " be the companion of thy solitude, he shall avert,
 " with a brother's zeal, every gloomy reflection
 " that may endeavour to intrude upon thy peace,—
 " and he shall assist thee in the cultivation of those
 " morals which will tend to thy everlasting felicity.

" I too,—I, my Louisa, will be a partner with
 " thee in thy happiness. Fed by thy hand and cheered
 " by thy smiles, I shall once more realize the joys
 " my Fanny afforded me. I shall thus live over
 " again, and by so doing enjoy the satisfactions of
 " youth, tempered by the experience of age. This,
 " this my child shall be thy father's portion! render-
 " ed happier in the reflection that thou art partaker
 " with him in the pleasures which await his accept-
 " ance, and the amiable instrument of his perma-
 " nent repose."

It was with the greatest difficulty he could put a
 period to his discourse.—His eyes were for a
 while immoveably fixed upon her, nor could
 the respect he entertained for the rest of the com-
 pany restrain him from embracing her with an ard-
 our which only paternal tenderness could afford an
 excuse for.

Mr. Lloyd, who had hitherto remained a mere
 spectator of what was doing, addressing himself to
 Mr. Clayton, demanded his attention as follows:

" I mean not, Sir, to dispute with you a father's
 " right;

THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE. 11

“ right ; but it ought however to be remembered,
“ that she in part belongs to me, without whom
“ *childless you had been else.*”

“ Had I not taken care of her you would not
“ have come so speedily to the knowledge of her ;
“ —exclusive of which, I have a title in her as the
“ daughter of my sister, under which character I
“ beg the liberty of saluting her, a freedom, which
“ I assure you, I never yet took with any of her
“ sex.”

Mr. Lloyd having in this manner diverted the attention of Mr. Clayton from his daughter, who had so long engrossed it wholly to herself, begged of that gentleman to favour them with his history, which promised to afford them no less entertainment than information, and without, which would be a difficult matter to form a proper idea of many particulars necessary to elucidate the reasons of his sister's elopement.

In conformity to this request, Mr. Clayton began the relation of his life and adventures as follows.

C H A P. II.

Containing the History of Mr. Clayton. A Voyage to and from the East Indies. Matrimonial Advice of a superannuated Peer. The Touch-stone of Indifference. A sudden Revolution of Sentiment and an embarrassed Situation.

“ **T**HE wonders I have this day been an interested witness of, call for my warmest gratitude and acknowledgement to him who so marvelously raises up good out of evil, and who in the valley of death creates a light to guide us to everlasting happiness. To him be the honour and the praise due to his unbounded goodness, who has

graciously heard my voice and restored me at his own fit time, to be partaker of the blessings and the comforts he has been preparing for me, and who never forsakes those that put their trust in him.

“ I need not inform you, Sir (addressing himself to Mr. Lloyd) that I am descended from an antient and honourable family. My father dying whilst I was extremely young, left me, possessed of very little patrimony, to the care of my uncle Lord Meanwell, with whom I continued to the age of fourteen, at which time, by his interest and recommendation, I was sent to the British settlements in the East Indies as a supercargo.

“ Upon the credit of my alliance, I was soon enabled to make a more respectable figure than the generality of such gentry, and as I had made myself master of the rudiments of commerce, especially such as more particularly subsisted betwixt the natives of the oriental kingdoms, I speedily realized a considerable fortune.

“ Some domestic matters requiring my presence in England, the following year I arrived safe in the Downs, where I was cordially received by my uncle and divers others of my relations, who congratulated me on my prosperous voyage and the success which had attended my first commercial attempt.

“ Having settled the business which had occasioned my return to Europe, I was making every preparation for a second embarkation, when his lordship sending for me one morning to his bed-side addressed me nearly in the following terms :

“ I know not what may be your thoughts in respect to the motive which induces me to seek the present interview with you ; I however trust that you have every reason to rest satisfied of the sincerity of my friendship and of the strict honour which guides me in my intentions and good wishes for your welfare.

“ I would

“ I would wish to see you settled ; and that in a
 “ manner which may contribute to your satisfaction
 “ and future felicity. You know that you are likely
 “ to succeed me in my fortunes—you are my nearest
 “ relation and I wish for no other heir. Now I should
 “ be sorry that all which I have been so long saving
 “ up, with unwearied industry, should revert to a
 “ man who has no taste for domestic happiness. It
 “ is therefore my desire, it is my ardent prayer, to
 “ see you matched with a lady that may share with
 “ you in your joys and serve to dispel with her smiles
 “ the anxieties and pains natural to a life of care.

“ For this purpose, and knowing how limited
 “ your acquaintance is with the sex, I myself have
 “ been assiduous in your service :—nor have my
 “ endeavours entirely gone unrewarded.

“ With much care and enquiry I have at last fixed
 “ upon one, who is in every sense calculated to
 “ render you completely happy. Her person, though
 “ superior to most of her sex, is the meanest of her
 “ accomplishments : her good sense is unequalled,
 “ and her family and fortune unexceptionable.

“ You will readily credit my assertion (continu-
 “ ed his lordship) when I name Miss Jarvis to you.
 “ I have already sounded her father, who is far from
 “ having any aversion to the proposal ; on the con-
 “ trary, he has sent you an invitation, desiring your
 “ company at his house in Gloucestershire, where
 “ you will have every opportunity of seeing and
 “ conversing with the young lady. I would there-
 “ fore recommend it to you, to use no delay in ac-
 “ cepting of his offer, but instantly to set off for the
 “ residence of your mistress, by whom I doubt not
 “ but your addresses will be favourably received.”

“ I thanked his lordship for his good intentions
 respecting me, and confessing a total indifference for
 the sex in general, I however assured him of my readi-
 ness

diness to act in the manner he advised me, as I well knew he was anxious for my welfare and solicitous only to advance my fortune.

“ I had never it is true, been over attentive to Miss Jarvis, nor indeed could I, as I had never seen her but once, and then only sufficient to learn that she was more remarkable for her pride than for her other accomplishments, either mental or personal.

“ As I was aware however of the difficulty I had to encounter, should I attempt to oppose my uncle’s opinion and inclination, I prepared myself to pay a ready obedience to his desire, and in a few hours set out for Gloucestershire.

“ The old gentleman gave me a very cordial reception, and after being somewhat refreshed from the fatigue of my journey he introduced me to his daughter. I paid my respects to her with that politeness due unto her sex, and must candidly confess that I found very little cause to alter the opinion I entertained of her from my former interview, as her pride and haughtiness were sufficiently displayed to damp every idea which her beauty might otherwise have created.

“ Fully and equally indifferent with respect either to her virtues or her imperfections my only study was how best to fulfil my uncle’s intention. It was not however long I had to continue in this mind:— in a single moment my resolution was overthrown, and I experienced the uncertainty of human determinations, when apparently the most permanent and established.

“ A young lady, blooming as Hebe, interrupted us by her sudden entrance. Seeing me present, she was about to retire, which Mr. Jarvis prevented by desiring her to stay, and the more to induce her, he mentioned me to her as his particular friend.

“ Heavens! what were my feelings at the sight of her!—in an instant my former indifference for the
sex

sex was transformed almost into idolatry. I gazed, I trembled, I was petrified and confounded.—

“ Miss Jarvis perceived my confusion and asked me with a kind of mischievous solicitude, what ailed me ?

“ I pleaded a sudden indisposition and availed myself of that opportunity to retire to bed.

“ All night long I lay ruminating on the perfections of the enchanting creature who had caused so rapid a revolution in my sentiments. It was in vain I attempted to procure to myself a momentary relief to the severity of my reflections, by the kindly interference of sleep ; this was a blessing denied me, and restless and uneasy I lay intranced in thought, counting the tedious minutes and wishing for the morning.

“ When I reflected on the change a few hours had caused in my ideas, I was astonished. I instantly perceived the difficulties I had to overcome ere I could arrive at the attainment of my hopes. The uncertainty I laboured under in respect to the connections and situation of her I adored ; the obstinacy of my uncle, and the improbability that Mr. Jarvis would ever consent to the preference which I had given another, and which of itself conveyed an insult to his daughter’s pretensions, unfavourable to her pride and subversive of his intentions ; all operated contrary to my wishes.

“ The consideration of these matters,—however replete with obstructions to my passion, did not in the least discourage me from proceeding. The only advantage I was determined to abide by, was that of cunning. I knew how difficult it would be to keep the situation of my heart long a secret from the penetrating eyes of Miss Jarvis ; and that the mortification she would thereby endure would be the means of setting her jealousy at work to undermine whatever I might attempt to effect in opposition to her will.

“ I know

“ I know not why it was that I became so uncommonly suspicious of that Lady—I knew very little of her, but from report which had rather been in her favour. I was however greatly prepossessed against her, and every minute more so than the former.

“ Early in the morning I received a visit from Mr. Jarvis, who enquired much after my health and how I had rested.

“ I thanked him for his enquiries, and informed him, that although I had enjoyed but an indifferent night’s repose, I was nevertheless ready to attend him in a ride or a walk, whichever his inclination might lead him to make choice of.

“ Having dressed myself, at the old gentleman’s desire, we took a ride round his extensive manor. The beauty of the prospects, the melody of the birds, and the healthful salubriety of the air fully compensated for the restless hours I had spent in bed, and I returned from so pleasing and wholesome exercise entirely refreshed and almost a new creature.

“ The ladies had not yet made their appearance, although the morning was considerably advanced: however in a little time I had the satisfaction of witnessing their approach.

“ Upon this second view of my charmer, I was more than ever captivated: I was in truth so much so, that I was unable to salute them or otherwise pay my respects, till Mr. Jarvis, who perceived my remissness in this particular, roused me from the confusion I was in, by exclaiming:— “ Why, “ Mr. Clayton, don’t you perceive the ladies !”

“ This exclamation in an instant recalled my attention, and I went through the ceremony of salutation, tho’ not without manifesting a very evident embarrassment, which was noticed by every person present.

“ During

" During the time of breakfast I sat insensibly gazing upon the idol of my hopes and incapable of returning a rational answer to the many questions put to me. An involuntary sigh which escaped me, somewhat sympathetically raised an instantaneous blush upon the cheek of my fair adorable. I perceived it, and by a natural impulse blushed in return.

" My confusion was so great, that I was compelled to seek refuge by availing myself of my old plea—*of being indisposed*; which was very readily credited by the old gentleman, and whatever were the sentiments of the ladies, they apparently had no suspicion of the real cause of my illness, but attributing it to the fatigue of my journey, advised me to go to bed.

" I was not however much inclined to follow their prescription; but making some trifling excuse for the melancholy which overswayed me, I informed them it was a complaint to which I was much subject, and such as time alone could prove a physician to.

" When the ladies had retired I asked Mr. Jarvis who the young lady was that had made such an impression upon my heart?

" He told me her name was Lloyd, and that her father in his last will had appointed him guardian to her. " She is a good girl, said he, and may probably one day or another meet with an advantageous match; her father having left her to my care, I shall endeavour to render justice to the trust reposed in me and turn her trifling fortune to the best account."

" Notwithstanding the information which this discourse presented me with, I was as much as ever at a loss in what manner to proceed.

" If I openly discovered my aversion to the proposed

18 THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

posed union with Miss Jarvis, I knew it would be the means of drawing upon me the displeasure of her father and Lord Meanwell.—If I married Miss Lloyd without their consent, I was certain of incurring their resentment; and if I should avail myself of a partiality in my favour to seduce her from the paths of virtue, I should never forgive myself—reason, religion, honour all forbade it!—

“ Whilst I was thus busied in ruminating on the most prudent method to act, I was all the while ignorant of the lady’s sentiments respecting me. I had reason to imagine that she was even unacquainted with her conquest, and I therefore wished for an opportunity of convincing her of the sincerity with which I regarded her.

“ It was not long before such an opportunity offered.—

“ Walking one morning in the garden, I perceived her in a path not very distant from that which I had chosen as the scene of my meditations. I was determined that moment to inform her of the state of my heart; it was a sudden resolution, and I prepared myself to put it in execution.”

C H A P. III.

*A Declaration of Love in the Style of modern Romance.
An Interruption. A Specimen of fatherly Advice,
and a Letter to a Superior.*

“ CROSSING the path which separated us, I overtook her just as she was entering a temporary pavilion which Mr. Jarvis had erected in the center of the garden.—It was a modern fabric, and such as gave an air of romance to the scene we were about to represent.

“ Seeing me so near her, she started as if surprised;

prized; which I perceiving, respectfully bowing and retiring about three paces, address'd her thus :

“ Be not alarmed, Madam, at this intrusion upon your privacy : I mean not to offend ; I wish not to provoke your displeasure. On the contrary, it is the desire I have to gain your esteem which now induces me to approach you.

“ The presumption of this address will I fear impress you with ideas unfavourable to my wishes—but, be assured, Madam, that I would remain dumb for ever rather than be the willing instrument to create your anger.

“ If therefore, Madam, you have no aversion to a man who from the first moment he saw you was deemed to adore you ; if you think an honest heart (unexperienced in the wiles and artifices too often practised by his sex) not entirely unworthy your acceptance, give him some reason to convince him that you will favour his hopes, and not for ever leave him a prey to the despair which at present surrounds him.

“ Indifferent to your whole sex, I came down to this place at the desire of my uncle to pay my addresses to Miss Jarvis. Insensible till then to female perfection, I was only anxious to fulfil the intention of my journey, when you like a meteor burst upon my sight, threw my ideas into disorder, and destroyed all my determinations in a single moment.

“ This, Madam, is what you have occasioned, and to you only can I look for a remedy for the evils you have caused. If I am awake, you are the perpetual object of my thoughts ; and tho' I sleep, you are ever present to my imagination.

“ The anxiety, and the solicitude which I am eternally suffering on your account, claim a share at least in your compassion. If you cannot, there—
“ fore,

“ fore, be prevailed upon to do justice to my hopes,
 “ by returning in some measure the affection with
 “ which I have hitherto regarded you, yet grant
 “ me your pity.—I shall deduce to myself consolation
 “ even in *that*. To know that you do not
 “ hate me will be some satisfaction to me, and
 “ whatever fate may decree for me hereafter, *that*
 “ reflection will afford a pleasing relief to the severity
 “ my cares and the extremity of my sufferings.”

“ I had concluded this artless address to her a
 considerable while before she had so far recovered
 from the astonishment it had thrown her in, as to
 be able to afford me an answer.

“ Divesting herself, however, at last of her fears,
 with a musical propriety, every syllable of which
 penetrated to my very heart, she replied nearly as
 follows.

“ The many favours and civilities I have received
 “ from my guardian and Miss Jarvis; and
 “ the character which you have been received in at
 “ this house, alike forbid my encouraging your addresses.
 “ The manifest injustice I should thereby
 “ render my friend would deservedly expose me to
 “ the imputation of ingratitude. I beg, Sir, that you
 “ will therefore desist from farther prosecuting a
 “ suit which it would be as impolitic in you to ask,
 “ as it would be base in me to grant.”

“ Notwithstanding I must confess myself somewhat
 disappointed at meeting with this reply, I was
 nevertheless determined not to give her up so easily.
 I had heard much of the punctilios of the sex;
 and my love and honour both forbade me to relinquish
 her without once more renewing the attempt.—

“ And is love, Madam, said I, to be governed
 “ like gross earthly passions, which owe an obedience
 “ to the slow unanimated hand of Prudence
 “ and dull decorum? Can we restrain the noblest im-
 “ pulses

“ pulses of the soul by laying down a scale to regulate them by, formed by the plodding heads of needy Philosophers? or is it to be supposed that Nature has been thus profuse in her favours to you, without allowing you to receive the adoration which is so much your due? Unskilled in the wiles of mankind, I only know I love by the sensations your presence excites. When you are absent I am most unhappy, and when I am blessed with the sight of you, I am confused and enchanted. My visit to this house is, Madam, indeed truly unfortunate. If I fulfil the motive which induced me to it I am for ever plunged in misery. And if I am not favoured with the hope that you do not entirely disapprove of my passion I am equally the victim of despair.”

“ I soon perceived by her irresolution and the attention with which she regarded me, that I was not quite an object of indifference to her: I perceived it with joy, and I even hoped to profit by this knowledge of her partiality.

“ After a moment seemingly spent in determining what answer to return me, she replied thus:

“ I am, believe me, Sir, exceedingly unhappy in thus being forced to witness a declaration which so particularly affects myself. Circumstanced as I at present am, I am utterly unable to return you any answer agreeable to my wishes. Had fortune indeed (continued she with a sigh) brought you hither in a different character than that in which you are received by Mr. Jarvis, I should find no difficulty in listening to your passion; nay, what is more, I should even be pleased to be convinced of your affection. However, as matters are, I must once more desire, Sir, that you no longer solicit me on a point which it is impossible I can ever comply with, and which it would be highly

“ un-

“ ungenerous and dishonourable in you farther to urge.”

“ Just as she had finished the last syllable, Miss Jarvis made her appearance, which hindered me from putting in a reply for the present. However, I was not a little satisfied at hearing from her own mouth, that my addresses did not upon the whole displease her: this afforded me some consolation amidst all my uneasiness, and helped to support me against the powerful trials I was doomed to undergo.

“ In spite of all I could do, my passion every day gathered new strength;—I sighed and grew melancholy—and perpetually tormenting myself with apprehensions which my affection naturally excited, I exhibited every symptom which might lead to a discovery of the real cause of my illness.

“ Mr. Jarvis was however intirely ignorant of my sufferings; and on the contrary, frequently expressed his astonishment at the little progress I had made in my suit to his daughter, which, somewhat luckily for my honour, he attributed to that lady’s *reserve*, and in consequence of that persuasion expostulated with her on her supposed delicacy, which he assured her was equally untimely and unnecessary, and such as exposed her to the charge of prudery.

“ It was with the utmost difficulty Miss Jarvis could persuade him, that I had never once opened my lips to her on the subject of marriage; and that so far from being urgent in a particular which so much tended to accomplish the motives of my visit, I had even been deficient in the little civilities which her sex and situation demanded; scarcely ever attempting to entertain her without the presence of a third person, and then, labouring under such evident embarrassment and confusion, that she had every reason to suppose that my affections were already engaged

engaged, or that I had unaccountably taken a dislike to the match, which in either case did not promise much security to her happiness.

“ The old gentleman strove all he could to banish (what appeared to him) to improbable a notion—he reminded her of the readiness with which I embraced the proposal made me by Lord Meanwell—he convinced her how much my future interest depended upon my keeping my promise made to his Lordship, and how advantageous the fortune I was to receive with her would prove to me who was a commercial man.—In short, he left no argument unused, which afforded a probability of allaying the suspicions my behaviour had given birth to.

“ In the mean time, I was consulting with myself in what manner to put off the intended union. Indifferent in regard to future consequences, I was determined no longer to carry on a deception which would prove in the end as unprofitable as dishonourable.

“ I however judged it expedient, previously to inform my uncle of the objection I had to a marriage at that time, only remembering to be cautious in regard to the motive I might assign him for adopting a resolution so extraordinary.

“ For this purpose I sent him a letter conceived in the following terms :

“ My Lord,

“ Confident of your Lordship’s friendship and partiality, I the more readily take the liberty to address you on a subject, which, as it materially concerns my future happiness, will, I trust, meet with your Lordship’s favour and approbation.

“ I am at present, my Lord, in a most critical situation—if I proceed, I am for ever miserable—and if I retreat, I thereby inevitably expose myself to your Lordship’s displeasure and indignation.

“ Thus

“ Thus circumstanced, I have no hopes of re-
 “ dreds but from your Lordship’s goodness;—rely-
 “ ing on which, I shall, without further ceremony,
 “ lay my case before your Lordship, not doubting,
 “ but it will be deemed an object truly de-
 “ serving of your compassion and uncommon in-
 “ dulgence.

“ In obedience to your desire, my Lord, I came
 “ to this place with the intention of forming an al-
 “ liance with a family, who, ever since my arrival
 “ amongst them, have been vigilant in contributing
 “ in every measure to my pleasure and satisfaction.

“ Fully indifferent to the whole sex, I beheld
 “ Miss Jarvis as the woman destined to be my
 “ future bride. As a lady she was entitled to my
 “ respect: as the woman who was to be my
 “ wife she was doubly so. I am, therefore, happy,
 “ my Lord, in having it in my power to say that I
 “ was no ways deficient in *that* respect.

“ Circumstances, my Lord, will sometimes arise,
 “ which in an instant may overthrow every previ-
 “ ous determination, and he who before was remark-
 “ able for his indifference, will be as much distin-
 “ guishable for his delicacy or aversion.

“ Such, my Lord, is the case with me—I before
 “ assured your Lordship of my readiness to obey
 “ you in whatever step you might think necessary
 “ to my advantage.—I once more take the liberty
 “ to repeat it to your Lordship, that I am yet equal-
 “ ly ready equally willing to sacrifice my life, nay
 “ what is more, my peace and happiness, to your
 “ Lordship’s satisfaction.

“ This, my Lord, will absolutely be the con-
 “ sequence, should you persist in your desire of see-
 “ ing me united to Miss Jarvis. It would be im-
 “ possible for me to refuse your Lordship, although
 “ by so doing I should unavoidably incur what I
 “ have before related.

“ Strange

“ Strange as it may appear to your Lordship, I
 “ have nothing to object against the young lady:
 “ her appearance, even in my eyes, is respectable;
 “ her accomplishments indisputable; her morals
 “ unimpeachable; yet, my Lord, in spite of these
 “ advantages she is a woman with whom I can ne-
 “ ver expect any real happiness or domestic satis-
 “ faction.

“ I am assured your Lordship means to act only
 “ for my good, the certainty of which makes me
 “ trust that your Lordship will indulge me so far as
 “ to permit me to relinquish every further attempt
 “ in the matrimonial way, and to return home
 “ with the intention of convincing your Lordship
 “ how much I am, my Lord,

“ Your Lordship’s

“ Most obedient,

“ And very humble servant,

“ JOHN CLAYTON.

C H A P. IV.

An Epistle from a Right Honourable. An intended Union unexpectedly procrastinated. A Scene at parting. A critical Conversation, and a Love Letter.

“ **H**AVING dispatched the above epistle to his
 Lordship, I waited patiently in expectation
 of an answer, which it was not long before I was fa-
 voured with.

“ Fluctuating between the extremes of hope and
 fear, I eagerly broke the seal, which presented me as
 follows :

“ Sir,

“ When you say, that you believe I am actuated
 “ in my intention respecting you, by no other motive
 “ than a regard for your welfare, you form a right
 “ conception

26 THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

“ conception of my behaviour. It was the desire I
 “ possessed of promoting that welfare, which induced
 “ me to wish to see you united to a virtuous wo-
 “ man, who, independent of the advantages your
 “ fortunes would receive by to prudent an alliance,
 “ would by her engaging manners disperse the cares
 “ which so often invade the tranquillity of the human
 “ mind, and soften the pillow which invites you to
 “ repose.

“ Extraordinary however as your behaviour un-
 “ doubtedly is, seeing you are unable to form an
 “ excuse for so irrational a conduct ;—far, very far
 “ be it from me to wish you unhappy. The council
 “ I gave you sprung from my regard for you, a re-
 “ gard which I should be thought no longer anxious
 “ about, should I be the instrument of rendering you
 “ miserable.

“ If you cannot, therefore, upon a further trial,
 “ reconcile yourself to an union which Prudence
 “ pleads powerfully in favour of, you have my leave
 “ to return. I am only sorry that matters have been
 “ carried so far, as Mr. Jarvis will, I fear, consider
 “ your behaviour as an insult offered his family.—
 “ He is a gentleman whose good opinion I am am-
 “ bitious of maintaining, and I could therefore wish
 “ that such an alliance might yet take place : how-
 “ ever, terminate your intentions how they may,
 “ believe me nevertheless to be unalterable.

“ Your friend and wellwisher,

“ MEANWELL.”

“ The receipt of this kind epistle instantly deter-
 mined me how to act. I fought my adorable Fanny,
 to whom I declared my resolution of resigning all
 further pretensions to Miss Jarvis, whom I found it
 impossible I could ever love, and an absence from
 whom I only regretted, as it likewise deprived me
 of the sight of her who was mistress of my affections.

“ Before

“ Before I took my leave, I however prevailed upon her to permit me sometimes to write to her;—nay she even flattered me so far as to promise to answer my letters. This proof of her goodness I was unable to thank her sufficiently for;—she, however, read in my face the sincerity of my gratitude, and my senses grew giddy with joy and ecstasy.

“ The same evening I informed Mr. Jarvis that I had received a letter from my uncle desiring my attendance in town, and for which place I intended to set out on the succeeding day.

“ The old gentleman was exceedingly unwilling to part with me. He pressed me to stay some little time longer with him; described in the most romantic terms the pleasures I should partake of in the country, and how superior his situation was to any the neighbourhood of the metropolis afforded.

“ Finding however that I was resolutely bent on leaving him, he desired that I would finish the business which called me away, as expeditiously as possible, that he might once more have the pleasure of my company, which he had unaccountably taken a particular liking to — I say *unaccountably*, because I had bestowed very little pains to gain his good opinion, so greatly was my whole attention engrossed in contemplating the virtues and perfections of his fair ward.

“ When the hour was arrived in which I was to take a long adieu of all that this world afforded worthy my bestowing a thought on, I found my spirits had so totally forsaken me, that I was entirely unmanned. My resolution flagged, and I wished for an excuse to continue longer with the dear object of my wishes. It was in vain. — Go I must I saw the necessity of the task which I had imposed upon myself — I saw it with pain, and I insensibly dissolved into tears.

Mr. Jarvis very naturally imputed this emotion
VOL. II. B to

23 THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

to the excess of my grief at being obliged so suddenly to part with his daughter. I did not attempt to undeceive him, and the good old gentleman was so transported with this fancied mark of my affection, that he with difficulty refrained from accompanying me in so humid a testimony of my sorrows.

“ The most trying part I had yet to enact, — namely, that of taking leave of my Fanny.

“ The carriage which was to convey me to London was already at the door, and I had but a minute to spare, and in that minute I had a thousand things to say to her.

“ She was in her apartment, where, with the leave of her guardian, I repaired to bid her farewell.

“ The first thing which I observed upon my approaching her, was her lovely eyes shining through a copious display of tears, and her fair bosom almost ready to burst with contending passion.

“ No sooner did she cast her eyes upon me than she blushed, “ *grace divine and love ineffable.* ” — The confusion she was in, gave her a thousand additional charms which I had never before discovered in her. I gazed on her enraptured, and for a moment forgot all my griefs.

“ And will my Fanny, said I, sometimes vouchsafe to think of a man, who is for ever doomed to adore her? whose love is of that pure and spotless kind, that it infinitely transcends the gross sensual passions which in general actuate the minds of the vulgar? will she permit him to hope that he may one day or other profit by his passion, and that the constancy and affection which he is determined to manifest, will not altogether pass unrewarded? ” —

“ Be contented, Sir,” replied she, with the knowledge that you are not indifferent to me. Neither prudence, nor delicacy will at present permit me to say more. Farewell, Sir, — wherever fate
“ may

“ may assign you a residence, may you be happy !”

“ Adieu, most adorable of women !—ever present to my imagination,” said I, — “ I will not lose your idea—*that* shall tend to comfort me in every situation and scene of life.—Adieu, Madam ! —Adieu !”

“ The violence of my feelings caused my tears to flow afresh,—it was a weakness however which I was no ways ashamed of—it was a mark of humanity, and I gloried in the signature.

“ In a few minutes I quitted the house which contained my treasure, and late the same evening I arrived in London.

“ Lord Meanwell, sorry as he was at my aversion to a match upon which he had so much set his heart, was nevertheless glad to find me in good health. He particularly enquired what were the motives which induced me to act so contrary to his desire, and whether the sudden change in my sentiments was occasioned by any impression I had received from another ?

“ Whatever, my Lord, may be my weakness, said I, of this be assured, that I will never marry any woman without your Lordship’s previous concurrence and approbation. — This is a deference particularly due unto your Lordship’s rank and elevated station, and to the friendship and generosity which I have ever experienced from your unalterable goodness.”

“ I wish not, replied his Lordship, to penetrate into matters which may probably be as improper for me to ask a solution of, as disagreeable in you to reveal ; I only recommend it to you to behave with prudence and never to suffer yourself to be led away by a foolish passion, so as to act in opposition to your own enlarged understanding and natural good sense. Seeing, therefore, that you are so much averse to an union with Miss Jarvis, I will myself to-morrow write to her father and

“ form an excuse for a circumstance, which I am
 “ sorry to say, I almost consider as inexcusable—
 “ however, as I would not wish to see you unhap-
 “ py, I shall give over all further expostulation
 “ and content myself with the voluntary promise you
 “ have given me, which I expect you firmly a-
 “ bide by.”

“ Having thus satisfied his Lordship of my obedience, and of the opinion which I entertained of the obligations I lay under to him, I retired to bed. Instead of sleeping my imagination was employed in ruminating on the situation of my hopes. I knew my uncle would never give his consent for my marrying Miss Lloyd, as, in spite of his many good qualities, he was immoderately fond of that pernicious evil—GOLD; and I had foolishly debarred myself from the advantage of a private union by the voluntary promise I had made him of never entering into a connection of that sort without first obtaining his consent. This was the Charybdis on which all the fond expectations my fancy had given birth to were doomed to destruction, and this was the rock which was replete with so many dangers to my hopes and happiness.

“ To live without Fanny I knew would be impossible. A clandestine marriage, neither a regard for her delicacy nor my own promise would permit a thought of, and to avail myself of dishonourable means—I shuddered at the idea!

“ In this dilemma what could I do?—I could not think of resigning her; she was already but too much in possession of my heart. Her dear image was perpetually the object of my devotions, and her absence would, I know, serve more than ever to impress me with an opinion of her worth and the excellencies of her person and understanding.

“ Exhausted

“ Exhausted with reflections like these, it was with the greatest difficulty I could compose myself to rest. In the morning, his Lordship dispatched a special messenger to Mr. Jarvis with a letter, assigning some domestic reasons why the intended treaty of marriage with his daughter would *then* be inconvenient, and at the same time apologize for the trouble we had given him.

“ Overjoyed with the circumstance which so much favoured my passion, I eagerly embraced the opportunity to write to my charmer, and to present her with a repetition of what she had already been the witness of—I mean, my love and my invariable affection.

“ The letter was as follows :

“ Madam,

“ Will you permit me to keep you in remembrance of a passion which you yourself have given birth to ?—A passion which I can only expect to profit from by a recollection of your tenderness and goodness ? Will you suffer me to address you as the oracle of my hopes and the mistress of my affections ? And will you not be angry at a freedom which I am induced to take only in consideration of your many amiable qualities ?

“ Believe me, my dear Fanny, without you I am miserable, in vain I look around for you. — You are no longer the object to arrest my sight,—no longer the bewitching creature whose presence dispersed the cares of mortality and soothed the sorrows of a troubled mind.

“ Restless, forlorn, and uneasy, I am almost distracted with the prospect which lies before me. On either hand I perceive nothing but dangers and difficulties. Deprived of the sweet consolation your presence afforded me ; deprived of every satisfaction which I once enjoyed in your company, I am reduced to a situation truly pitiable.

32 THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

“ In vain I wish to be once more blessed with
 “ the sound of your voice—I listen ! —and my ear
 “ is matched with the ‘ *howlings of the midnight*
 “ *storm* !’—In vain I sigh for the pleasure of your
 “ appearance.—I gaze !—and lo ! I behold nothing
 “ but deformity !—

“ My hours too, pass away heavily, no longer
 “ winged with the transporting ideas which your
 “ company so constantly excited,—no longer ren-
 “ dered pleasant by the charms of your conversation
 “ and the graces of your behaviour.

“ If then, my adorable Fanny, you cannot ap-
 “ prove of a passion which is founded on an esteem
 “ for your virtues —if you cannot resolve to return
 “ an affection which merits your regard—at least
 “ bestow your pity on a man who adores you, and
 “ the study of whose whole life shall be devoted to
 “ the purpose of convincing you with what sincerity
 “ he is

“ Your admirer, and
 very humble servant,

JOHN CLAYTON.”

P. S. “ Should I be favoured with a line from
 “ my charmer expressive of the sentiments she may
 “ entertain in behalf of one who loves her, it would
 “ indeed be considered as a proof of her goodness.”

“ The above epistle I gave the servant with a
 strict charge to take an opportunity of delivering it
 privately into her own hands. This he promised me
 to perform, and presently afterwards proceeded on
 his journey into Gloucestershire.”

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

An Answer to the Letter contained in the last Chapter. A trying Circumstance. A second Epistle rather long, accompanied with a short Reply. Another Journey into Gloucestershire. An affecting Interview, and a repeated Declaration.

FROM the time the servant set out till his return, I was perplexing myself with thinking what reception my letter would meet with from her whom it was my wish to please above all others, and in what manner he would be able to present her with it. She had, it is true, given me leave to write to her; she had even promised to favour me with an answer,—but then, in the joy I felt for so distinguished a favour, I had never consulted with her in what manner to direct my letters; this made me apprehensive that the messenger might not find an opportunity of conveying it in the manner I wished, the fear of which exceedingly alarmed me.

“ Besides, the very short interval that had elapsed since I had quitted her, would give her the less reason to expect a line from me so soon, in consequence of which, she would not so readily be in the way to receive the fresh token of my affections, which I intended for her acceptance, and which I was greatly fearful would not easily reach her hand.

“ These apprehensions were exceedingly natural to a person in my circumstances. Impressed with a passion, in the pursuit of which I had a thousand difficulties to encounter, I created dangers where an uninterested spectator would have perceived none, and I formed obstacles which had no foundation in fact.

“ Three days after his leaving town the messenger returned.—

“ After having given his Lordship an account of his executing the commission with which he had been honoured, agreeable to his Lordship’s commands, he informed me that he had also delivered my letter as I wished into the lady’s own hands, who had desired him to present me with a few lines in return.

“ With the greatest eagerness I seized the welcome present, and devoutly kissing it, I hastily broke open the seal that secured the precious treasure which I was so anxious to possess myself of, and which to my great joy I found to be as follows :

“ SIR,

“ The fresh instance you have given me of your regard and the sincerity of your affection, calls for my thanks. Proofs like these can never come untimely or unacceptable to me. Be assured that I very much lament the cause of your absence, and if the information can afford you any satisfaction, I will acknowledge, that I almost wish to see you once more amongst us.

“ If, after you have settled the business which at present detains you in town, you can make it convenient to pay a visit once more to your old friends in Gloucestershire, by no one of them all will you be more cordially received than by

“ FRANCES LLOYD.”

“ On the perusal of this short epistle, I was more than ever enamoured :—the kind invitation it contained ; the ingenuous manner in which she expressed her regard, and the generous freedom with which she concluded ; all, rivetted anew the fetters she had before bound me with, and made me still more her slave, still more the voluntary captive of her matchless virtues.

“ It was evident from the manner of her writing that Mr. Jarvis had made a secret of the contents of his Lordship’s letter, or she would not have been so ready

ready in giving me an invitation which I could not with any regard to propriety accept.

“ That gentleman, in his reply to his Lordship, lamented greatly the cause which deprived him of the honour of an alliance which so much flattered his ambition. He however was urgent in his desire, that I should repeat my visit to him, as whatever my sentiments might be in respect to the proposed union with his daughter, he nevertheless confessed himself particularly fond of my company, and in consequence thereof, wished me to return into the country as soon as ever I could make it convenient to myself.

“ In opposition to this invitation, my uncle, perceiving with what reluctance I listened to his matrimonial advice, counselled me to prepare for a second voyage to India.

“ Unable to determine in what Manner to proceed, as well knowing how impossible it would be to prevail upon his Lordship to desist from his resolution of obliging me to leave Europe, seeing I had no excuse now to make which could possibly be of any service to me ; I found myself under the disagreeable necessity of writing to my Fanny, and informing her of the whole affair, and how probable it appeared that I should be obliged to quit England without seeing her.

“ The epistle I sent her for this purpose was as follows :

“ My ever adorable Fanny !

“ Worn out with misfortunes, exhausted with grief, and preyed on by disappointment, shall I pour out my afflictions before her whose bosom is the seat of humanity and compassion ? shall I solicit a portion of that humanity, and a portion of that compassion in behalf of a man who is doomed to feel the keenest pains which can torture the human heart ? may I expect to find an exertion of your pity and benevolence when you shall have

“ heard of the severity of my fate, and how little I
 “ deserve the punishment I meet with, and which
 “ it is impossible to avert? but whither am I run-
 “ ning!—I know your goodness of heart; I know
 “ the extent of your compassion, and I am assured
 “ you must, you *will* do justice to my sufferings.

“ To avoid a match disagreeable to my inclina-
 “ tions, as it would have been the instrument of
 “ separating me forever from her I loved; to pre-
 “ serve inviolate these affections—and that hand
 “ —and that heart which I had devoted to you
 “ alone, I left you my Fanny; I left you, as I then
 “ fondly hoped, but for a time;—but alas! so fickle
 “ and uncertain is the lot of mortals!—I now fear
 “ I have left you for ever!

“ Unacquainted with my passion and incapable of
 “ forming a judgement of the extent of my feelings,
 “ my uncle has commanded me to prepare for my re-
 “ turn to India.—It is a long and a dangerous voyage,
 “ my Fanny—and the more so, as I shall thereby be
 “ unable to hear from her whom I adore above the
 “ world. It is a voyage which my inclinations take
 “ no part in; it is a voyage which I dread to re-
 “ flect on.

“ But alas! it is in vain that I repine—My doom
 “ is irrevocably fixed, and every succeeding hour on-
 “ ly serves to confirm it.

“ Could I be assured that my Fanny would some-
 “ times think of a man, who is determined to che-
 “ rish her image as the dearest treasure of his soul;
 “ could I flatter myself, that when the storm howls
 “ and tempest roars, she would prefer a prayer for
 “ the safety and preservation of him, who values
 “ her next his God; the assurance would soften the
 “ rigour of his fate, and serve to comfort him amidst
 “ all the dangers to which he may be exposed.

“ Adieu, most amiable of women! receive this as
 “ the last token of my affection.—I know not how
 “ soon

“ soon I may be obliged to embark, otherwise I
 “ would contrive personally to take a farewell of you,
 “ which, however, melancholy the occasion, would
 “ administer the most pleasing satisfaction to the
 “ unfortunate

“ JOHN CLAYTON.”

“ This letter I entrusted to the care of a faithful
 servant, whom I instructed how to behave, and who
 I knew would conform himself in every respect to the
 rules I had laid down for his observance.

“ By means of the artful address with which he
 executed his commission, I was soon favoured with
 the following answer.

“ SIR,

“ The intelligence you have conveyed to me ex-
 “ ceedingly distresses me, and furnishes me with sen-
 “ sations of grief little inferiour to your own. Nor
 “ has that grief received any mitigation from the
 “ apprehensions of your not having it in your power
 “ to pay us a visit before you go. I wish, sincerely
 “ wish, that the acknowledgement of my esteem may
 “ be the means of producing you any satisfaction.
 “ Of my good wishes, and constant prayer for your
 “ welfare, you may ever rest assured. Wherever
 “ you go, or whatever business you transact, I most
 “ heartily wish you success in, and that you may
 “ speedily return again to your native land, happy in
 “ your fortunes, and (if that may contribute to your
 “ happiness) happy in the friendship of

“ FRANCES LLOYD.”

“ The messenger informed me, that she deliver-
 ed him the above with tears in her eyes, beseeching
 him to present it me with her best wishes.

“ This proof of her regard determined me to go
 down into Gloucestershire, and repeat my visit to
 her, whatever might be the consequences resulting
 from it.

“ Without imparting my intention to my uncle,
 I, in

I, in consequence of this determination, immediately set off for the spot which contained the mistress of my heart, and which I reached the same evening.

“ The nearer I approached her the more violently was I agitated. My bosom throbbed with tumultuous pleasure at the re-appearance of a single hill or meadow which served to remind me how much nearer I advanced to the idol of my hopes.

“ Perceiving a farm house at a small distance from thence, I entered it, and, by the assistance of a piece of gold, soon procured a person to convey a line from me to Fanny, whereby she might gain information of my arrival, and contrive to give me the meeting, as I had many objections against making my appearance at Jarvis house.

“ The note I sent to her was briefly thus :

“ Madam,

“ If you have any compassion remaining for a man
“ whose misfortunes have nearly reduced him to de-
“ pair, you will instantly favour me with your com-
“ pany — the bearer will give you every necessary
“ information, and conduct you to the sight of

“ Your admirer.

“ JOHN CLAYTON.”

“ In about half an hour he returned with the following note :

“ SIR,

“ My guardian and Miss Jarvis will be gone this
“ afternoon on a visit to a gentleman in the neigh-
“ bourhood—I was to have been of their party, but
“ will take the opportunity of pleading an indispo-
“ sition, which will exempt me from an attendance
“ which cannot fail of proving disagreeable, as it
“ would be the means of depriving *me* of the hap-
“ piness of your company —and *you*, of being con-
“ vinced of the regard and good wishes of

“ FRANCES LLOYD.”

“ Agreeable to the hopes with which she had
flattered

flattered me, and about the time which she had taught me to expect her, I beheld her approach.

“ Good heavens! what were the emotions of my soul at the sight of her!— I was confounded amidst my transports, and spite of every previous preparation, for a while I was incapable of addressing her.

“ The violence of my feelings being however somewhat subsided, I respectfully saluted her, whilst the tears stood mutually quivering in our eyes, and rendered us unable to express the joy we experienced at a meeting we so much desired.

“ Ah, Madam!” said I, the moment my agitation of mind would permit me to speak—“ and is it thus we meet? glad as I am of an opportunity which blesses me with the sight of her whom I esteem above all others; yet, how am I distressed when I reflect on the motive which induces me to this visit—namely to bid you a long adieu! Gracious God! what crime have I unknowingly been guilty of that should merit so severe a punishment? what have I even attempted, the enormity of which should so stubbornly stand betwixt me and mercy? am I ever thus to be cut off from hope and happiness without a possibility of discovering an end to my torments?”—

“ Grieve not, Sir, I beseech you,” replied she interrupting me; “ we are all subject to disappointment and misfortune. I too am partaker with you in your sufferings. Be assured that the wind which wings you from your native land will disperse every joy, every pleasure your Fanny might otherwise possess.”

“ And will you then, Madam,” said I, “ suffer me to leave you without first giving me some testimony of your esteem and generosity. Bent down beneath the load of my cares and the apprehension of losing you, I dare hardly express my
“ wishes:

“ wishes : they are such however as will do no violence to your delicacy ; they are such as cannot offend the chafest ear : and such as you might listen to without disapprobation, or the frown of displeasure.

“ From the first moment I saw you, I loved you — tenderly loved you. A stranger to every dishonourable sentiment, my heart only sighed for you on the principles of virtue. I wished to make you mine by those ties, those legal obligations which human wisdom has invented for the better observance of the divine command. But alas ! I am so circumstanced, that the very means which would extend relief and satisfaction to another, only serve to afford me dangers and perplexities.

“ Dependent upon Lord Meanwell, I dare not enter into so solemn an engagement without his approbation. I have even, my Fanny, proceeded so far as voluntarily to have given him a promise of this kind. In vain my love and my affections plead against this single obstacle—— My honour is concerned, and I am of force constrained to yield to its dictates.”

“ Be honour then your guide, Sir,” said she ; it is a virtue which is the foundation of all others. Love may alter ; affections and passions may change, but honour should for ever reign with undiminished force the tutor, guide, and regulator of our actions.”

“ But does my Fanny consider,” replied I, what pangs a long and unlimited absence will inflict on him who truly loves ? does she entertain a right conception of the fears and apprehensions inseparably connected with a passion like mine ? and is she acquainted with the torments which must perpetually invade the breast of him who is severed from the object of his wishes ?——

“ Even

“ Even at this instant, whilst I am happy in a
 “ contemplation of thy beauties; whilst I gaze on
 “ thee with a delicacy of transport unknown to mere
 “ sensualists; whilst yet my ear is blessed with the
 “ heavenly music of thy voice, and my every sense
 “ partakes of the ecstasy thy presence inspires; even
 “ at this instant, my Fanny, am I miserable! Re-
 “ flection, like a poisonous adder, prepares its ve-
 “ nom to annoy the pleasures which the present
 “ moment imparts: whilst I am taught more than
 “ ever to comprehend the value of thy perfections,
 “ to mock my hopes—it shews the uncertainty
 “ of my enjoyments; it teaches me, that in the
 “ smallest interval of time I may be for ever de-
 “ barred of all my soul holds dear on earth: it re-
 “ presents to me the horrors of parting, and the in-
 “ finity of the loss I shall thereby sustain; and it
 “ dreadfully imbitters the fountain of every joy
 “ which my imagination once fondly pictured as
 “ my own.

“ Every moment I am more and more confirm-
 “ ed in my despair. Time uncommonly rapid in
 “ its motion, hurries on with a violence which
 “ scarce leaves room for hope, and whilst yet I have
 “ a thousand tender things to impart, the fatal pe-
 “ riod arrives which snatches thee from me—per-
 “ haps, *for ever!*”

“ The agitation of mind I endured at this re-
 flection rendered me incapable of proceeding. She
 read my troubles; she read them with pain, and mu-
 tually deploring our common misfortune, we devoted
 a flood of tears to the memory of our sufferings,
 and concluded with a vow of eternal constancy, and
 to live only in expectation of the time when fate
 should so far indulge our hopes as to enable us by a
 legal union to put it out of the power of chance to
 interrupt our happiness.

“ It

“ It was now almost time to think of parting—this was a trying circumstance—it was what we could neither of us bear to think of, and yet it was a scene which could not be dispensed with.

“ By her persuasion I was, however, at length prevailed upon to defer my return to town till the succeeding day, and in the mean time to content myself with the indifferent accommodations which the farm house afforded. This I very readily agreed to, and the more willingly as she promised to renew her visit to me early in the morning, a favour which I thankfully received, as a proof of her regard and of the sincerity with which she estimated my affections.

“ In a few minutes after having given me the above assurance, she took her leave, and I, greatly fatigued with my journey and the conflict of mind which I experienced, retired to bed.”

C H A P. VI.

Honour inferior to Affection. A Proposal of Marriage. The Runaway. A speedy Union. A proof of disinterested Love, and a long Farewell.

“ I HAD now time for an exertion of thought. The situation in which I had involved myself, by means of the voluntary promise I had made Lord Meanwell, afforded considerable matter for reflection. On one hand, my word, my honour stood engaged: on the other, my love and my affections pleaded with the most powerful energy. I wished to obey the latter, and at the same time was fearful of a violation of the former.

“ And shall a word, a promise, which is itself
 “ but air,” said I, “ oppose the united powers of
 “ love and happiness? shall a single expression
 “ given in the unguarded moment of thoughtless in-
 “ difference

“ difference overturn the foundation of earthly
 “ felicity?—The sacrifice is too much!—Unphilosophical and highly absurd in itself, a promise, if
 “ lightly made, and if created in opposition to reason,
 “ should never bias the independent mind. The affections of the soul, superior to the romantic obligations of imaginary honour, are to be consulted
 “ before every thing, as on them depend our domestic peace and inward satisfaction; on them we
 “ rest our hopes of earthly happiness; without the
 “ the indulgence of which, we are miserable even
 “ amidst the greatest profusion of riches, and the
 “ fullest enjoyment of transitory pleasures.

“ Besides,—the promise I made was voluntary
 “ and unsolicited; as such, I have an undeniable
 “ right to revoke it, and the more so, as it owes its
 “ very existence to error and an ignorance of the
 “ human heart.

“ At *that* time too, I was unacquainted how
 “ very essentially my happiness depended on the
 “ success of my hopes. Greatly as I loved, I foolishly supposed that a trifling absence would have
 “ administered a remedy to the violence of my passion, and have soothed the troubles with which
 “ my imagination was surrounded. But now,”
 “ continued I, “ convinced of my error, it would
 “ be an absurdity to Reason, and a criminality to
 “ myself, should I any longer consider myself as
 “ bound to abide by, what experience shews to be
 “ at once ridiculous and unjust.”

“ In this manner did I argue with myself, and the conclusion determined me in the resolution of securing to myself her hand and her affections by a private marriage, and then to trust to chance entirely for the rest.

“ Early in the morning I arose, and, agreeable to her assurance on the preceding evening, I once more had the pleasure of my Fanny’s appearance:—

After.

44 THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

After the first salutation, I informed her of my thoughts in respect to the promise I had given Lord Meanwell, and how impossible it would be for me to live without her. — I expatiated on the folly of sacrificing our happiness to the affectation of a virtue which was of itself contrary to Reason, and I eagerly prayed her to listen to my proposal of a private union, as the only means of securing to us against the accidents of Fortune.

“ She was at first greatly surpriz’d at so sudden a change in my manner of thinking, and appeared as if doubtful of the sincerity of my offer, nor was it without much difficulty that I could persuade her I was really in earnest.

“ Astonished at so unexpected a proposal, she knew not how to answer me: she was unwilling entirely to refuse, yet wanted courage to acquiesce.

“ The variety of passions which flushed in her cheek, gave me no incompetent idea of what she suffered.

“ What answer can I return,” said she, “ to so
“ extraordinary a mark of your regard?—or rather,
“ ought I to hear it, seeing it is repugnant to those
“ very principles which but yesterday so greatly im-
“ pressed you, and which you seemed determined
“ to abide by as the rule of your conduct and the
“ guide of your actions?”

“ Ah! mention no more, Madam,” replied I,
“ a circumstance which so much distresses me.—
“ Heaven is my witness that I would gladly keep
“ my promise with Lord Meanwell, was it not in
“ opposition to my happiness: but by obeying his
“ Lordship I should plunge myself into misery, as
“ without you I am for ever wretched.”

“ By the manner in which she addressed me, I immediately perceived that I should have no very difficult task to induce her to favour my pretensions,
and

and to persuade her to a conformity with my sentiments; trusting to which, I persevered in requesting her to listen to my suit, which with a reluctance that did the greatest credit to her delicacy and sensibility, she at last complied with.

“ As it was impossible to execute a scheme of this sort in the country where she was so well known, she readily agreed to accompany me to London, and the same night was fixed on for that purpose, against which time I promised to procure every convenience necessary for effecting her escape, and securing her from the vigilance of her guardian.

“ To avoid any suspicion of her intentions, she thought it most prudent to leave me for the present and return to Jarvis Houte, assuring me however of her determination to see me again in the cool of the evening.

“ The opinion she had formed of my honour and generosity more than ever endeared her to me. I was transported with so happy an issue to my troubles, and unmindful of the consequences of my uncle's displeasure, should he unfortunately come to the knowledge of my proceedings, I prepared myself only for an uninterrupted succession of pleasures on which imagination might surfeit and reason grow distracted.

“ As I was fearful that the Jarvis family might by some accident get intelligence of my situation, I kept myself closely concealed, dispatching only a servant, whom I had habited in a manner which might give no cause for mistrust, to provide every thing in readiness against the appointed hour which was to bless me with the protection of her I loved, and which was to put me in possession of a treasure which I valued above the world.

“ Every thing being in readiness by the care and management of this faithful domestic, about an hour before

before sun-set I had the happiness to behold my charmer once more approach.—

“ It was a cool, clear evening ; the beautiful serenity of the sky and the gentle fannings of the western breeze, to a mind turned to superstition, would have appeared as prophetic of our future felicity. Not a cloud deformed the azure bosom of the horizon, nor one rude blast angrily threatened to disturb the tranquillity of the peaceful waters, but sunk into a perfect calm, nature seemed to have disrobed itself of all its terrors, the better to display the glories and the perfections of meridian excellence.

“ Notwithstanding the matchless beauty of the scene, I perceived that my Fanny was greatly affected with the thoughts of parting with the companions of her youth, and the spot endeared to her by a remembrance of the pastimes of childhood.—I saw the tear swelling to her lovely eye, whilst I was thanking her for the attention which she manifested to her promise : I saw it with pain, and I gently kissed it away, as the precious token of humanity and generous sensibility.

“ Dependent on your love, dependent upon your affection, Sir,” said she, “ behold I am here ready to give you the most convincing proof of the opinion I entertain of your honour and candour :—let not my readiness to oblige be however uncharitably construed into a forwardness imprudent and unjustifiable ; neither let a diminution of your regard be the result of a credulity—perhaps too great !”

“ Never ! never !” replied I, “ thou generous creature, shalt thou have reason to lament the confidence with which thou hast favoured me ! anxious for thy happiness, my whole life shall alone be devoted to the purpose of convincing thee of the purity and sincerity of my affection, and of
“ the

“ the reality of that passion which owes its source
“ to thy virtues and perfections.”—

“ Nothing now remaining to impede our journey, I assisted her into the carriage which was in readiness for our reception, and seating myself down by her, with a joyful heart, I conducted her with all the expedition possible to London.

“ Unwilling to give her any occasion for upbraiding me with delaying what I had been so urgent to procure her consent to,—the very morning of our arrival in the metropolis we were privately married.

“ I had provided myself with an apartment, in every respect fit for our purpose, neat, convenient, and retired, to which I conducted her:—now no longer under the apprehension of losing her, but (united by the most indissoluble tie) secured to me by the title of the wife and mistress of my heart.

“ I was now happy as the most capricious fancy could wish; in full possession of every satisfaction which I sought the enjoyment of, and only uneasy at the reflection of being obliged soon to leave those sweets which were rendered dearer to me by possession, and which gave me the most poignant grief at the thoughts of resigning.

“ My uncle, who from my behaviour perceived nothing which could reasonably give him cause for suspicion, was only intent upon preparing matters for my departure. By his means, young as I was I was honoured with an appointment equally favourable to my fortune and my ambition. In any other situation I would gladly have thanked him for his attention to my interest; but circumstanced as I then was, I considered his assiduity as meant only to distress me, and to sever me from her, without whom I would not wish to exist.

“ The time now drew near which was to witness my long farewell to Europe. It was impossible to
avert

48 THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

avert the stroke, and I prepared myself for its approach with all the resolution I was master of.

“ Finding there was no method whereby to avoid a circumstance so distressful to our loves, my Fanny intimated a desire of accompanying me and sharing with me in the dangers and fatigues of a voyage which (if left behind) would subject her to endless fears, and involve her in all the perplexity and trouble which youth and inexperience can be supposed liable to.

“ Pleased as I was with this fresh instance of her love, I however strongly opposed her inclination with every argument which I could advance against it. I represented to her the length and danger of the voyage; the inconveniencies to which she would be exposed; the impossibility of keeping a circumstance of such a nature from the knowledge of my uncle, and the consequences which would result from his being made acquainted with the secret of our connection, which at present it was my interest to keep him ignorant of.

“ And do you intend to persuade me from my purpose,” said she, “ by describing dangers and difficulties, which may serve indeed to intimidate an irresolute mind, but which can never make any impression on a heart tutored by affection?—Ah! think not so meanly of your Fanny! —“ Can you expect that when the wind blows and the tempest roars, that the knowledge of my own personal safety will make me insensible to yours? —“ or that secure *myself* in the enjoyment of an uninterrupted calm, I shall be unmindful of the waves and rocks to which *you* are exposed? No, be assured, that the cares and anxieties which a separation from you must load me with, will be infinitely less bearable than the actual sharing with you in every danger which the most fertile imagination can possibly create.”

“ Not-

“ Notwithstanding the weight of these arguments and the apparent resolution which guided her in her address to me, I was determined upon no account to indulge her request. Contenting myself with the consolation I might receive by hearing from her, I prepared myself for departure, and having taken leave of my friends and relations with a sorrowful heart, I repaired on board the ship which was to convey me to the oriental world.

“ The wind being fair, we soon got clear of the Downs, and shortly after lost sight of land, which I kept in view as long as possible ; and recommending my Fanny to the care of that Providence which eternally watches over the children of men, we proceeded on our voyage, and with very little accident at length arrived safe on the continent of Asia.

C H A P. VII.

Containing some Affairs of a domestic Nature, necessary to be known. A School for the Sensualist, and a Contest betwixt Pleasure and Philosophy disagreeably terminated.

“ **T**O keep as much as possible the knowledge of our marriage from the ears of Lord Meanwell, and to avoid the consequences which might naturally be expected to arise from an information so unfortunate and impolitic, we had contrived previous to my departure, that each should adopt some other appellation.

“ For this purpose, I removed my Fanny into a different part of the town, where I furnished her a house, and provided every necessary domestic for her as a Miss Wilmot, and at which place I visited her under the borrowed name of Gandon.

“ Before

“ Before I left her, she acquainted me, with a blush that reflected additional grace, that she was pregnant. This assurance administered greatly to my satisfaction, and gave me to hope, that on my return I should have the transporting delight to see a renewal of our joys rendered more permanent and binding by the tender pledges of a passion which was founded on the basis of real and disinterested love.

“ But to return.—

“ I continued in India near three years, during which space I heard several times from my wife, who had been happily delivered of twins, and who was unwearied in her solicitations of prevailing on me to revisit my native land.

“ Unable to resist her repeated desires and intreaties, I settled all my affairs, and with my uncle’s approbation prepared myself for returning to England.

“ One evening as I was walking near the sea side, directing my eyes towards the happy island which contained the idol of my soul, I was accosted by a gentoo servant richly habited, who calling me aside, conveyed the following billet into my hand.

“ SIR,

“ If your resolution is no ways inferior to your appearance, you will without hesitation or delay follow the bearer, who will pilot you to,

Your’s,

“ INCOGNITO.”

“ I was at first greatly alarmed at the receipt of so extraordinary a challenge, and incapable of determining whether or not I had best accept it ; however, as it appeared to have been penned by a *gentle scribe*, I could not without an impeachment of my courage refuse to obey, the summons, for which purpose, addressing myself to the messenger, I bid him
go on.

“ Respectfully bowing and pressing his fore-finger upon

upon his lips, as a token of silence, he took the lead, and conducting me through several narrow passages, with which I was totally unacquainted, we at length arrived at a large house, into which he introduced me.

“ Having shewn me into an apartment most elegantly furnished, he left me, observing all the time to maintain the same invariable silence.

“ Struck into admiration of an adventure so new and unexpected, I waited impatiently for the moment which was to give me some little light relative to the intention or meaning of the ceremony which had been so strictly observed, and which more than any thing perplexed me for a solution of.

“ In about an hour I had the satisfaction to observe the door open, and in an instant a table spread with the choicest profusion of every delicacy which imagination or the most capricious appetite could wish for. The dishes were all of solid gold and of the most exquisite workmanship; and the viands culled with a care which would almost surpass belief, and calculated only for the luxurious gratifications of voluptuousness and the grossest sensuality.

“ Every thing being thus duly prepared for the banquet, I had not long to wait before a lady entered, the splendor and ornaments of whose dress seemed to eclipse every thing of the kind I had before seen.

“ She was an European, young and handsome, her manners however, seemed to partake much of the natural effeminacy of the East, which she affected to a fault, and which gave her all that romantic appearance, which, imposing on the senses, strikes the idle gazer with admiration, and serves as a veil to cover every imperfection arising from vicious passions and a depraved inclination.

“ Without any other salutation than a gentle
VOL. II. C bending

bending of the body, she sat herself down upon a sofa which was purposely placed there, and at the same time dumbly inviting me to seat myself next her, she by her *own* example induced me to do honour to the entertainment, which evidently appeared to have been solely provided on my account.

“ I had not courage enough to refuse her invitation, so greatly was my wonder excited by the scene of which I was a spectator. However, my apprehensions would not suffer me to partake much of the delicacies she had provided, so that, although I sat down to the table, I scarcely tasted one article of the many she had so liberally spread before me.

“ Supper being at length ended, during the time of which I had done little else than gaze, I was determined to address myself to her for the purpose of knowing for what intent my company had so particularly been requested.

“ This resolution was however rendered unnecessary by the lady herself, who, before I had time to put my intention in execution, accosted me thus :

“ The extraordinary method which I preferred
 “ to make you acquainted with my desire of seeing
 “ you ; the cautious manner by which you was conducted to this house, and the remarkable treatment you have experienced since you have been
 “ in it, all, no doubt, Sir, conspire to impress you
 “ with very singular ideas of my conduct and character.

“ Equally superior, however, to the praise or
 “ censure of the world, I am indifferent as to any
 “ construction which may be put upon my behaviour, as an independent mind knows no restraint
 “ of vulgar awe, and acting only in a manner which
 “ tends to its own pleasure, possesses neither inclination nor time to encourage thoughts which arise
 “ in opposition to the scheme of happiness which I
 “ have laid down for my own satisfaction.

“ That

“ That scheme and those pleasures it is my wish
 “ to make you partaker of.—I met you accidentally
 “ a few days since, and if I am not much mistaken,
 “ your countenance contains every thing which pro-
 “ mises an approbation to my system of happiness.

“ I have riches sufficient to glut the avarice of
 “ the most mercenary,—I have youth, (and if I
 “ am not flattered) beauty enough to satisfy every
 “ moderate wish,—I have a natural propensity to
 “ pleasure, and a desire that you should share with
 “ me in those advantages which nature and fortune
 “ so liberally have blessed me with.”

“ Astonished as I undoubtedly was at the freedom
 of this address, it was, however, nothing more than
 in reason I ought to have expected. The singularity
 of the invitation; the luxurious profusion displayed
 in the entertainment she had prepared, and the
 levity of her whole appearance, instantly impressed
 me into an idea of her character, and cautioned me
 against her wiles and the allurements which she art-
 fully contrived to dazzle my senses, and which she
 was unwearied in the exertion of

“ My fortitude was, however, superior to all
 her cunning; I saw the weakness and vanity of her
 arguments, and I determined to expose their fallacy,
 and to resist with vigour the attack made upon my
 virtue, and the imposition offered to my faculties of
 reason.

“ Can vice then,” said I, “ however decorated
 “ with exterior ornament, compensate for the loss of
 “ that peace of mind which is only to be found in
 “ the mansion of the virtuous? Can the gross sen-
 “ sualist, after having gratified the cravings of his
 “ every appetite, display that serenity of soul and that
 “ calmness of disposition which alone belong to the
 “ moderate and the good? Alas! it is not superfluity
 “ it is not in the abundance of riches and prosperity

54 THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

“ that we are to seek for the abode of happiness. In
 “ the cool moment of reflection, when the pulse no
 “ longer beats high with enjoyment, when desire
 “ fails, and the whole mass of blood resumes its na-
 “ tural temperature, we look in vain for that secret sa-
 “ tisfaction, that inward approbation, which cha-
 “ racterizes the contented mind ; we idly endeavour
 “ to trace in ourselves those delightful retrospec-
 “ tions which ever administer comfort and strength to
 “ the virtuous and the wise ; and, lost in a labyrinth
 “ of perplexity, we at length discover our error, and
 “ sit down too late to mourn our folly and to wish we
 “ had regulated our lives and conduct more in con-
 “ formity to the laws of reason and the dictates of
 “ moderation.”

“ A truce with those stale sentiments,” replied
 she : “ Are the pleasures of existence to be curbed
 “ by the contracted notions of sour philosophy ?
 “ Are the precepts and admonitions of grey-headed
 “ enthusiasts to counteract and destroy the impulses
 “ and passions inherent in youth ? Or is it in gloomy
 “ severities of monastic bigotry that we are to look
 “ for happiness ?

“ Nature has pointed out to all, one universal
 “ road, and few there are who have not in some
 “ degree a relish for it : I mean PLEASURE. Super-
 “ stition and hypocrisy would, is it true, disguise
 “ it under the artful veil of religion. In spite how-
 “ ever of their care and their cunning, the general
 “ dispositions of their souls will at times break out
 “ and manifest their wishes and their desires in
 “ terms incontrovertible, and such as it is impossible,
 “ to be mistaken in.

“ Observe the natural bent of those who make
 “ religion a trade. In the midst of their austerities ;
 “ in the midst of their most zealous affectations,
 “ their fondness for that universal study will occasi-
 “ onally

“ onally display itself so far as to relax the severity
 “ of the devotee, and shew us that even enthusiasm
 “ is its advocate, and that the trite stale morals in
 “ opposition thereunto, which are so frequently re-
 “ tailed to us by pedantic philosophy, are either
 “ formed through an affectation of singularity, or
 “ that being grown past the relish of it himself, the
 “ desire of the dull monitor is to place all mankind
 “ upon a level with his own infirmities, and to
 “ restrain the generous ardour of youth by invidi-
 “ ously contemning those transports and those plea-
 “ sures which he can no longer enjoy, and which
 “ he would therefore wish to see for ever annihilated.

“ Unmoved by such superficial argument,” con-
 tinued she, “ be ours a nobler talk—TO LIVE,
 “ whilst yet the sweets of life receive new charms
 “ from youth and constitution ; whilst yet we are
 “ capable of enjoying the transports arising from
 “ health and a mutual inclination to please ; and
 “ whilst we yet retain the vigour of body and un-
 “ daunted firmness of soul necessary to add perman-
 “ ency to our loves and increase to our desires.

“ How many would consider themselves as in-
 “ finitely happy to receive so distinguishing a mark
 “ of my favour and partiality. It is you however,
 “ you alone whom I select for the purpose of par-
 “ taking with me in that felicity which fortune has
 “ placed in my power, and which I cannot enjoy
 “ without first making you a sharer with me. Pos-
 “ sessed of advantages so apparent and invaluable,
 “ I need not be long in seeking a person who would
 “ willingly and thankfully accept of my offer ; but
 “ as I have placed my affection upon you, from you
 “ alone I wish and expect an answer, how far you
 “ are inclinable to cherish a proposal which brings
 “ with it every pleasure and every satisfaction which
 “ avarice might crave or love can bestow ?”

" I was thunderstruck at her behaviour : the levity
 " and undisguised freedom of her conduct disgusted
 " me. I was, however, sensible of the dangers to
 " which I was exposed from her resentment, should
 " I by a refusal of her offer give her occasion for
 " an exertion of her power and authority, which I
 " had every reason to suppose extensive, and which
 " I was extremely cautious of putting to the proof.

" In spite of these dangers, I was nevertheless de-
 " termined to reject her proposal, and to arm my-
 " self against her wiles and artifices as well as I pos-
 " sibly could.

" Taking out my watch, I appeared as if sur-
 " prized at the lateness of the hour, and gave her at
 " the same instant to understand, that it was time I
 " should think of returning.

" Regarding me with a look of the utmost con-
 " tempt, though visibly mortified, she exclaimed—

" Cold constitutioned man! is this the reward due
 " to my love? Is this the only return you can make
 " to my affection?— But rest assured, Sir, that
 " this treatment shall not pass unpunished."

" I now began to perceive my error, and that I
 had been too hasty in my determination. I wished to
 rectify this fault : I attempted it, and the attempt,
 like most of my other endeavours, proved fruitless.

" Think not, Madam," said I, " that I intenti-
 " onally wish to offend you,—romantic as I consider
 " your sentiments to be, I should deduce to myself
 " considerable pleasure in having an opportunity of
 " convincing you of their impropriety, inconsistency,
 " and fatal tendency.

" The mistakes human nature is perpetually lia-
 " ble to, might serve to impress you with an idea
 " of the fallibility of private judgment, especially
 " when directed to a matter of such essential value

" as

“ as universal happiness. It is a point which requires the most mature deliberation in the investigation. I pledge myself, Madam, to return on the morrow, and if you can convince me by fair argument, that your notions are founded upon truth and reason, I will willingly submit myself to you in all things.

“ And do you foolishly think, Sir,” replied she, “ that I wished to see you merely with a view of wasting a little time in unprofitable sophistry, and that uninfluenced by passion or affection I should content myself with casuistical or logical distinctions ? It is true, for the purpose of intimating to you my sentiments and intentions, I condescended to avail myself of argument : this I did, that you might the better view the reasonableness of my scheme,—a scheme which scorns to be confined within the contracted limits of theory, but owes its beauties and advantages solely to experience and real enjoyment.

“ I will not suppose you so ignorant as to mistake my meaning ; you cannot be so insensible ! However, as you seem determined to remain obstinately deaf to the many hints I have thrown out, and to reject every offer, every proposal I have submitted to you, I am resolved you shall for once experience the treatment you are so anxious to draw upon yourself, and feel the resentment of an insulted, despised woman.”

“ I was at a loss to judge in what manner she intended putting her threats in execution : it was not long, however, I was permitted to remain in this state of uncertainty. Upon a signal from her, she was in a moment attended by her domestics, who, accustomed to their mistress’s orders, without uttering a syllable bound me hand and foot, and having gagged me, that I might not by my cries be able to procure assistance, they forced me into a

carriage, which, setting off with incredible speed, left me more than ever perplexed with reflecting on the uncertainty of my fate, and the apprehensions arising from the impossibility of forming any tolerable conjecture how, and in what manner, this extraordinary adventure would terminate.

C H A P. VIII.

A Comparison betwixt Virtue and Immorality. A Conversation of an extraordinary Kind. Compulsion destructive of Love. A repeated Interview, and an Instance of the Violence of female Resentment.

“**S**ECURELY fortified in my own innocence, I was no ways terrified with the situation to which I was so unexpectedly reduced, but rather was more pleased with it, as it afforded me an opportunity of manifesting the purity of my regard and the sincerity of my affection to my amiable Fanny.

“The comparison I made betwixt her and the lady who by her violent passions had given birth to the present adventure, was but little to the advantage of the latter. Rash, headstrong, and impatient, she acknowledged no rule but her will, and no superior but her passions, in the indulgence of which she considered no sacrifice as too great. Pampered with sensual gratifications and hurried on by libidinous appetites, she only studied by artificial means to promote a circulation of pleasures, which was the only substitute she knew of for peace of mind and real happiness.

“My Fanny, on the contrary, was moulded by the hands of gentleness and love: not one rude atom seemed to have been employed in her formation. Divested of her usual caprice, Nature appeared to have fashioned her from materials uniformly beautiful,

ful, and such as bade defiance to the attacks of ruder passions. Loving to her friends; courteous to her enemies, and affable to all, she lived but to bless, and she left *this* world to partake of the reward prepared for her in another,—a reward due to her merit, her virtue, and her constancy.

“ But once more to return——

“ Having travelled thus expeditiously, as near as I could guess, for the space of two hours, we at length arrived at an old Gothic building, at which we stopped, and into which my attendants, without consulting my approbation, immediately compelled me (unable to resist) to enter. The apartments, in point of elegance, were nothing inferior to those which I had so lately quitted. This however afforded me but very little satisfaction, as I was yet bound and gagged, which, together with the pain I endured from so continued and violent a distention of the jaw, was almost unbearable.

“ After a few minutes absence, one of my dumb attendants returned, and much to my liking unbound me, and restored me once more to the liberty of speech.

“ Making a sign, whereby he gave me to understand that I must follow him, he conducted me to a chambre, furnished in the European manner, with a bed and every convenience proper for repose; which he instructed me was intended for my use, and which he was urgent in persuading me, by motion, to avail myself of.

“ As I had nothing to fear, seeing I was prepared for the worst, and as I perceived that I had no will of my own permitted me, I made not the least hesitation to do that *voluntarily*, which I conjectured I should otherwise be *compelled* to do.

“ I was therefore presently undressed, and being greatly fatigued with what I had suffered, I soon fell into a profound sleep.

“ Insensible to my misfortunes, and insensible to the dangers which impended over me, I did not awake till the morning was considerably advanced, when, having somewhat recollected myself, I began to meditate upon my situation, and what I had to apprehend from the menaces which I had unwillingly borne witness to, and which I had but too great reason to fear would be put in execution against me. I greatly condemned my own folly in obeying an invitation delivered in so mysterious a manner, and which ought of itself to have rendered me suspicious of the writer’s intention : I however was resolved to betray no one symptom which might give them reason to accuse me of cowardice, but to wait in patient expectation of the event, avoiding equally the dangerous extremes of desperate phrensy or womanish weakness.

“ Having indulged myself with these kind of reflections, I was interrupted from their farther pursuit by the entrance of a servant, who notified to me, that my presence was wanted down stairs.

“ I now began to conceive a probability of my being made acquainted with the worst, and in consequence thereof armed myself with the utmost composure against every mischance which I might be doomed to experience from the united exertions of cruelty and disappointment.

“ All hopes of deriving any advantage from resistance, I knew to be frail and absurd. Single and unarmed, I should be poorly enabled to withstand the force of numbers, who from appearances were all trained to murder and bloodshed, nor could I be expected by prayers or persuasions to penetrate into the hearts of those merciless ministers of revenge, who knew no law but their mistress’s commands, and who were only anxious to fulfil the task she allotted them.

“ The

" These considerations determined me resolutely to bear whatever they might from necessity or inclination burthen me with, and recommending myself to heaven, which is alone able to succour us in the hour of trial, I followed the person who had summoned me, with a firmness which could never reflect disgrace on any one ambitious of the character of a christian or a philosopher.

" To my unspeakable surprize, I perceived on entering, the lady, to whom I was indebted for the novelty of my situation. Considering her as my most cruel and obdurate persecutor, I regarded her with a look, which plainly bespoke the state of my mind, warmed into resentment by a sense and memory of my sufferings.

" With a sullen indifference I saluted her, which she received with all the provoking pride of conscious superiority, and viewing me as the victim of her power, was as liberal in her insults, as immoderate in her triumph.

" Well, Sir," said she, " you now perceive how capable I am of punishing the man, who regardless of my favours and unmindful of my love, would proudly soar above my friendship and treat my offers with contempt.

" Justly as I have reason to be offended at such contumacy, and extraordinary as is the cause of my anger, I am nevertheless inclinable once more to treat of peace. Perhaps you have by this time considered better of the proposal I yesterday made you. Say, Sir, are you yet disposed to concur with me in my notions of pleasure and my scheme of happiness, or do you still persist in an unaccountable and obstinate opposition to my will, my desire, and my judgment?

" Can happiness, Madam," replied I, center in compulsion, or can love form any connection
" with

" with violence? Acting only for your good, If I
 " wished you to see your mistake through the eye
 " of reason; if I endeavoured to convince you that
 " you were deceived in your ideas of pleasure as
 " constituting real happiness, ought I to be blamed?
 " Do I not rather merit your thanks for my atten-
 " tion to your welfare and my regard for your ever-
 " lasting peace?

" No more, Sir!" exclaimed she, interrupting
 me; " I have already stated my objections to so-
 " phistical distinctions. The quiddities of scholastic
 " argument, if urged in opposition to my system of
 " pleasures, are vain, useless, and nugatory. Mo-
 " rality, like the icy finger of death, only serves to
 " chill and destroy the passions which give vigour
 " to human nature, and strength to society; it is a
 " monster which poisons the sweets of life and im-
 " bitters the transports of youth by reflections which
 " cause a total suspension of the powers of action
 " and of the noblest faculties of the soul. No more
 " than call to your assistance what I consider as the
 " greatest enemy to enjoyment; but, divested of
 " hypocrisy and the unprofitable solemnity of bigotry
 " and enthusiasm, prepare to yield an obedience to
 " her will, who is otherwise resolved to make you
 " sensible of her power."

" Alas, Madam!" I replied, " in what manner am
 " I now to act? incapable of availing myself of those
 " advantages which arise from a freedom of choice,
 " I am *compelled* to acknowledge an affection which
 " it is impossible I can ever feel. Love, indepen-
 " dent of compulsion, exists only in itself; it is a
 " passion of the soul which force inevitably destroys;
 " it is a flame which can no longer burn than while
 " assisted by mutual inclination, and which the most
 " inconsiderable blast of indifference for ever extin-
 " guishes.

" Can

“ Can I then afford encouragement to such thoughts, debarred as I am of my liberty and restrained from delivering my sentiments with the freedom I wish ?” —

“ Insulting man !” said she, once more interrupting me, “ am I for ever to suffer by your obstinacy ? but have a care ! it is my power to check that daring spirit, which administering to your pride betrays you into the most dangerous mistakes. — I would not, however, wish to exert so disagreeable a mark of my authority ; I would not even wish to think you merit my resentment : but impose not too long upon my affection. Patience, however confirmed, will in time decay, and give place for the rage of disappointment and the gall of inveterate hatred.”

“ Without waiting for my reply she left me, utterly incapable of knowing in what manner to conform myself. If I persisted in an opposition to her desires, there was but too much reason to expect some fatal effects from her indignation. She had already evinced her disposition to Revenge ; her power I knew to be extensive, and her creatures all devoted to her will.

“ And yet I could not think of affecting a passion which it was impossible I could feel. The imposition was too contemptible ; it was an insult to my understanding, and such as I was determined to give no encouragement to.

“ My life I considered as of no great value. — My Fanny indeed demanded that I should endeavour to preserve it ; Reason on the contrary forbade me sacrificing to its preservation ; it painted to me the shame of extending a miserable existence by the aid of dishonour ; it shewed me the unprofitableness of vice, even though productive of momentary ease and security ; and it taught me that I ought to submit to every

every evil rather than yield an implicit obedience to the will of an imperious woman.

“ Breakfast was presently afterwards prepared for me, which however I did not find myself much inclined to partake of. The recollection of what I had suffered entirely destroyed my appetite, and I waited only in expectation of hearing further from the violent author of my wrongs, and learning what more I had to fear from her outrageous passions.

“ About an hour after she had quitted me, she returned and appeared somewhat more calm than she was at either of her proceeding visits. Addressing herself to me she dwelt strongly upon her moderation and forbearance in permitting me the enjoyment of my liberty, after the repeated insults I had offered to her affection — insults which she pretended no other man on earth should have offered with impunity, and such as no behaviour of hers could serve as a justification of.

“ Finding her something more temperate than usual, I flattered myself with the probability of prevailing on her to attend to my arguments, averse as I knew her to be to such a measure: my hopes however were vain. She was obstinately bent on an adherence to her own opinions, and was determined to listen to nothing which made in opposition to her favourite doctrine, or seemed calculated to put any restraint upon her pleasures or passions.

“ Are you still resolved, Madam,” said I, “ that I shall suffer no interval to the persecutions with which you have thought fit to burden me? am I for ever to be debarred from that freedom of will which Nature in her bounty intended all mankind indiscriminately to enjoy? and can you idly imagine that such usage can be productive of love or affection? if you would wish me to incline to your peculiar manner of thinking, give me full, un-
“ conditional

“ conditional liberty. Restore me to that freedom
 “ which you found me in possession of ; and perhaps
 “ I may in time see the beauties of that scheme,
 “ and the advantages of that system you are so particular in the recommendation of.”

“ The demand I had thus made, appeared to her so extraordinary, that in an instant I observed her eyes flash with resentment : her cheeks by turns manifested a contrariety of passions, now deadly pale, and as suddenly changed to a deep red. Rage, revenge, mortification, and disappointment all operated on her in a manner which indicated a total absence of the faculties and powers of Reason.

“ Base, ungrateful, prevaricating slave !” said she,
 “ and is it thus you would reward the kindness of
 “ my intentions ? is it thus you would endeavour to
 “ return my love and shew an obedience to my will ?
 “ but know, this insolence shall not go without the
 “ punishment it merits, nor shall you longer remain
 “ ignorant of the power of one whom you have too
 “ long treated with a contempt, which will in the
 “ end return tenfold on yourself.”

“ No sooner had she ended this speech than she called together the ministers of her cruelty, who by her commands once more bound me, and dragging me with a savage barbarity disgraceful to the most uncivilized of human beings, thrust me into a dungeon, where, deprived of the light of heaven, they left me a prey to horror, darkness, and despair.

C H A P. IX.

An unexpected Release from Death. A Return to the Factory. A Visit from a Benefactress. The Triumph of Gratitude, and an Embarkation for Europe.

“**O**VERWHELMED with sorrow, three weeks did I live in this dismal habitation.— My cruel attendants came once every day to bring me the wretched allowance which my misfortunes were indulged with, and which was such as only (by lengthening a miserable existence) served to make me more sensible of my unhappy situation.

“ One evening, unable to sleep, as I lay stretched upon the ground bewailing the severity of my destiny, suddenly and unexpectedly the door which secured my dungeon was opened; I instantly conjectured that I was now going to terminate at once my misfortunes with my life, and under this persuasion uttered a short petition to that Being from whom alone I looked for aid, and on whose providence I had ever firmly relied as my guide and my protector.

“ A lamp which one of them bore discovered to me the face of a woman in every respect different from that of my unnatural persecutor: devoid of that whirlwind of passion, which disturbing the soul, hurries Reason beyond its bounds, and destroys the source of female delicacy; devoid of those unruly starts which serve to impress us with ideas unfavourable to the sex, she appeared a pattern of every thing bright and amiable.

“ Nor was her behaviour any ways inferior to the opinion I had conceived of her from her appearance. Whilst the tear swelled in her eye she unbound
the

the cords with which I had been fastened, and taking a bundle from her attendant, she obliged me to dress myself in the habit of a slave, as the only means of insuring me my life and liberty.

" I readily did whatever she desired me, and submitting myself entirely to her care and guidance, she presently conducted me out of a house wherein I had received the injurious treatment of a malefactor, and which I abhorred as the cave of destruction.

" As soon as she had fully released me from this detested dwelling, she addressed herself to me in the following manner :

" If, Sir, you are inclined to preserve that liberty
 " which I have put you in possession of, use no delay,
 " but instantly follow this servant, he will direct
 " you to the factory from whence you set out.
 " I have neither time nor inclination at present to
 " accept your thanks for the service I have rendered
 " you ; perhaps a day may arrive when I may put
 " your gratitude to the proof, and convince myself
 " of the idea you entertain of my behaviour, which
 " by restoring you to liberty gives me hopes, that you
 " will in future be equally prepared against the
 " violence or artifice of a woman, who would proceed
 " to any extremity in the gratification of her
 " passions, and who will henceforward be doubly
 " assiduous in effecting the revenge which she thinks
 " due to the disregard with which you treated her
 " offers."

" Without allowing me an opportunity of professing my gratitude and the sense I entertained of her services, she vanished, and left me with the servant to whose direction she had committed me.

" The night was exceedingly dark ; however as I followed my guide, who appeared to be conversant with the road, in about five hours we arrived, much fatigued, at the factory.

" It

“ It is impossible sufficiently to express my joy at having so happily escaped from a captivity which seemed probable of terminating only with my life. I returned thanks to heaven for the favour, and was determined in future to be cautious of blindly adventuring on the shallow foundation of a romantic invitation, to risk my liberty and my life in pursuit of idle curiosity.

“ Having liberally rewarded the guide to whom I was in part indebted for my safety, I made enquiry in what manner I could farther serve him. He begged that I would permit him to attend upon me during the remainder of my stay in India. This I very readily agreed to, and the more willingly as I had reason to apprehend some danger from the further resentment of his late mistress, who, it was to be feared, would carefully seek every opportunity of gratifying her revenge for the disappointment her pride had sustained, and in which case his assistance would be necessary to counteract any combination which an enraged woman might form for the destruction of the man she hated.

“ My friends and domestics had been under the most terrible apprehensions on account of my absence; they had one and all concluded that something fatal had befallen me, and under that conviction had been unceasing in their endeavours of gaining some intelligence whereby they might be ascertained of my fate.

“ My unexpected arrival amongst them, therefore, could not fail of giving them a singular satisfaction, and from them I learnt, that the ship on board of which I intended to take my passage to Europe, was not yet sailed, but was expected to weigh anchor every day.

“ This news afforded me no inconsiderable share of pleasure. My heart had long been with my Fanny,
and

and I now hoped to find no new impediment to debar me from seeing her.

“ The late adventure, however, in which I had unwillingly been so distinguished an actor, taught me to be wary and circumspect in all my undertakings. I had not mentioned a hint thereof to any of my acquaintance, considering it as most prudent to conceal a circumstance which would give them new matter of uneasiness, and prove entirely unprofitable to myself.

“ As I was one evening sitting alone, wishing for an arrival of the moment in which I was to embark for England, Mamoud (which was the name of the servant who had conducted me from the scene of my confinement) entered and informed me, that a youth without was desirous of speaking with me.

“ I asked him if he thought it was prudent to admit an unknown visitor, seeing he could not be ignorant of the danger to which I was perpetually exposed ?

“ By his advice, however, I complied, and in less than a minute he introduced a person who seemed rather to be an inhabitant of the other world than a mere mortal.

“ Without allowing me time for compliment, this beautiful vision, for such it appeared to me, addressed me thus :

“ It is now the season, Sir, in which I intend
 “ putting your gratitude to the trial. Behold, under
 “ the habit and semblance of manhood, a poor weak
 “ female, one who was once happy in rendering
 “ you a trifling service ; if you have yet remaining
 “ any sense or memory of that service, and if you
 “ would wish to reward it, promise to grant what I
 “ shall ask.”

“ I know not whether I was most pleased or surprised at this adventure. It was, indeed, my amiable deliverer

deliverer herself. I contemplated in her all the charms of my absent Fanny, and I was so much indebted to her goodness, that I was scarcely able to answer her.

“ And am I indeed, Madam,” said I, once more
 “ blessed with the sight of you? Devoted to your
 “ service, name the means, if within the limits of
 “ my fortune, that can recompence but the least
 “ part of the obligation which I lie under to you,
 “ and behold with what readiness I will fly to convince you of the sincerity of my gratitude.”

“ What I require of you, Sir,” replied she,
 “ will neither distress your fortune, nor affect your
 “ honour; it is in brief no more than this; suffer
 “ me to accompany you to England; I have riches
 “ sufficient to satisfy every moderate wish, and as I
 “ am heartily tired of this part of the world, it will
 “ give me a very singular pleasure to be under the
 “ protection of a gentleman whom friendship will
 “ induce to be assiduous in my favour, and who I
 “ doubt not will be happy in having an opportunity
 “ of convincing me of his esteem:”

“ I gladly embraced so lucky an occasion of assuring her of my regard, and of the sense I entertained of her kindness. The proof she required of my sincerity, by consenting to her becoming the companion of my voyage, I readily gave her; and, impressed with the warmest ideas of gratitude, I considered no sacrifice as too great to convince her of my thankfulness.

“ Unable to restrain my curiosity, in the next place I thought proper to make some enquiry in respect to the lady from the ungoverned violence of whose passions I had suffered so much. She informed me, that enraged at my escape, she had vowed to find me and punish me for the flight I had put upon her love, and the disappointment I had offered to her revenge: that she greatly suspected Mamoud
 and

and herself to be concerned in that transaction, the former of whom it would be impossible she should ever be reconciled to: and my deliverer further acquainted me, that fearful of incurring the resentment of a woman who was so much a slave to her passions, and which, from her suspicious temper, it was but natural to expect, she had meditated and effected her elopement, though not till she had possessed herself of her jewels and other things of value, which she desired me to take the stewardship of, for her use, or till such time as we arrived in England.

“ I was pleased that she had not neglected herself, and willingly took charge of the articles she so generously committed to my care, and the more so, as I considered this as a fresh proof of her confidence, and of the reality of her friendship and regard.

“ As the ship was ready for sailing, waiting only for a wind, and as I had already every thing on board, by her urgent persuasions I took leave of my friends, and embarked the same night.

“ Mamoud, whose fidelity I had been so pleasingly an evidence of, likewise accompanied us: I could not think of leaving him behind, exposed to the resentment and cruelty of a remorseless woman, who had more than once shewn herself to be divested of every generous and humane sentiment, and only a fit companion for the wolves of the desert.

“ He was not a little proud at receiving this mark of my attention to his welfare. His professions in consequence thereof were artless and sincere, and such as more than ever endeared him to my affection.

“ I had yet to learn the name and quality of my deliverer, nor was I without some curiosity in respect to that particular. I however contented myself with the former, reserving all enquiry as to the latter to some more favourable opportunity’

“ Maria,

“ Maria, for such was her name, was exceedingly in patient for our setting sail. In spite of the precaution she had observed to disguise herself under the appearance of manhood, her tears were visibly depicted in her countenance, nor did they experience any alleviation from the probability of having eluded the search of our persecutor by so prudent an embarkation, but on the contrary every hour witnessed an increase of her apprehensions and a confirmation of her uneasiness.

“ I was greatly distressed to see her so much subject to the impressions of terror, and strove by every method in my power to allay her fears, by representing to her the impracticability of putting in execution, determinations formed in the heat of passion, unripened by judgement and unassisted by reason.

“ It was however in vain that I offered these circumstances to her consideration ; she was better acquainted than myself with the extent of revenge, more especially when actuating the bosom of a disappointed woman, as she had been the frequent and melancholy evidence of a truth so apparent, and which gave her every reason to be alarmed, in spite of all the precaution she had observed, and in spite of every advantage which our situation gave us over the malice and resentment of so inveterate an enemy.

“ As I found no argument could prevail upon her to lay aside her fears, I refrained from any further attempt of that nature, and contented myself with exerting my interest with the Captain to make all the expedition he possibly could to weigh anchor and proceed on the voyage. Agreeable to my wishes, in the morning, the wind proving favourable, we hoisted our sails, and in a few hours were out of sight of land and free from every danger of revenge, malice, or desperate phrenzy

C H A P. X.

Containing the History of an Asiatic. The Danger of Ambition. Love of Pleasure, the Destruction of Virtue. The Errors arising from an Indulgence of irregular Appetites. A commendable Resolution and a final Retreat.

“THE further we made from shore, the greater was the satisfaction of Maria. Disburdened of her cares and no longer under any apprehensions of danger, the natural vivacity of her looks and the genuine cheerfulness of her disposition discovered itself in a manner at once astonishing and enchanting.

“As there was nothing now in the way to render such a request improper, I begged her to present me with the heads of her history. This she very readily consented to, and perceiving me attentive, began as follows:

‘When I recollect, Sir, that my history is blended with that of a woman from whom you received such cruel treatment, short as my narrative is, I am inclined to wish it still shorter. However, at your request, I shall depart from all disguise, nor aim at suppressing a particular which may tend to unravel the seemingly mysterious conduct of a woman to whom I have the misfortune to be nearly related, and notwithstanding which, one whom of necessity I am forced most heartily to detest.

‘In the isle of Jersey, about twenty years ago, lived a merchant of French extraction, named Ducane, who by his application to the duties of his profession had realized a considerable fortune.

‘To inherit this fortune, he had two daughters, Emilia and Phoebe, the eldest about fifteen years old, and the other seven years younger.

‘Monsieur

‘ Monsieur Ducane dying committed them to
 ‘ the care and guardianship of a particular friend in
 ‘ England, who faithfully acquitted himself of the
 ‘ trust reposed in him, and whose affairs calling him
 ‘ soon after to India (at the urgent request of the
 ‘ young ladies) readily acquiesced with their offer of
 ‘ accompanying him.

‘ They had not been long arrived in Asia, be-
 ‘ fore Emilia was so fortunate as to captivate the af-
 ‘ fections of a gentleman of vast property, who,
 ‘ with her guardian’s approbation, publicly paid
 ‘ his addresses, and shortly after married her.

‘ The only fruit of that marriage was myself, nor
 ‘ were there any pains or tenderness omitted by my
 ‘ parents, either in respect to my education or the
 ‘ cultivation of my morals. I will not say how far
 ‘ I profited by their care; suffice it, that they
 ‘ were satisfied in the reflection that their time and
 ‘ expence were not entirely misapplied.

‘ My aunt Phœbe began early to manifest an am-
 ‘ bition which threatened to be productive of the
 ‘ most fatal consequences. Towering with pride
 ‘ and a strange affectation of singularity, she form-
 ‘ ed notions of pleasure highly dangerous and absurd
 ‘ in themselves, and such as frequently drew on
 ‘ her the rebuke of her friends, who were greatly
 ‘ concerned on her account, as the strangeness of
 ‘ her conduct and the violence of her passions justly
 ‘ and naturally occasioned them to be.

‘ Nine years had she resided in this part of the
 ‘ world, when the Nabob of Arcot accidentally saw
 ‘ her, and, unused to sue, made her a proposal in
 ‘ form, which, as it flattered her pride and ambition,
 ‘ she without hesitation very readily accepted.

‘ That prince’s religion not permitting him to
 ‘ marry a Christian, the first sacrifice she made to
 ‘ power, was the renunciation of her faith.

‘ Estranged

‘ Estranged to her relations, lost to her country, and an apostate to her God, she now, unmolested, rolled in sensuality of the grossest kind, and taking every opportunity that afforded an indulgence to her pleasures, she laid the foundation of those sentiments which at present so eminently distinguish her, and which indicate a final disbelief of every obligation divine and moral.

‘ The Nabob her husband loved her with a tenderness uncommon in a country where the men are brought up in such absolute notions of their own supremacy ; he indulged her in whatever she required ; he foolishly took every occasion to feed her vanity, and he administered to her ambition in a manner which at once displayed something highly weak and contemptibly criminal.

‘ About four years after their union, the Nabob suddenly died without issue. His successor, who had formed just notions of her ambition, immediately ordered her to depart his dominions, fearful that the tranquillity of his subjects might be disturbed by the restless disposition of a woman, who had frequently afforded proofs of a fondness for power and a wish to govern

‘ This command, which it was impossible to resist, could not fail of sensibly mortifying her ; her pride however was of force compelled to yield to the superior strength of princely authority, and she quitted the spot which had so long borne witness to her greatness, with all the resolution which could be supposed to actuate a breast haughty and stubborn as her own.

‘ In the midst of these measures, the newly dignified prince however was mindful of her rank and station, and in consequence thereof ordered, that her jewels and the treasures she had avariciously accumulated, should be restored her entire and without deduction.

‘ So unexpected a mark of his kindness gave her every reason to be perfectly satisfied, seeing she was thereby enabled to pursue her grand doctrine of pleasure, which was an object nothing inferior to her ambition.

‘ As she was ignorant of a place of safety she returned to Calcutta, where she was cordially entertained by her sister and all her old acquaintance, who were happy in seeing her once more amongst them, and who were emulous who most should study to oblige her.

‘ I was in the eleventh year of my age, when my aunt came to reside amongst us. Her fondness and disposition for pleasure naturally gained upon a mind so tender and inexperienced as mine, and made me anxious to partake with her in the amusements which she was perpetually inventing, and for the enjoyment of which she alone seemed to live.

‘ As she always expressed a particular regard for me, seldom or ever paying a visit without taking me with her, I very innocently imbibed a partiality for her, which partiality ripened by degrees into an affection equal if not superior to that I entertained for the authors of my being.

‘ In this manner I lived till I arrived at the age of fourteen, when I had the misfortune to lose both my parents by an epidemical fever, which at that time was exceedingly rife, and which carried off many thousands, natives as well as Europeans.

‘ The suddenness of my father’s death gave him no time to settle his affairs, which from the extensiveness of his dealings, were in a very confused situation, and such as required an able head properly to regulate.

‘ My aunt thinking it improper that I should continue any longer in a place which could not fail

‘ of putting me in mind of my loss, took a house in
 ‘ another part of the town, which being less retired,
 ‘ promised to wean me from the sorrows I experi-
 ‘ enced in the recollection of my misfortunes and to
 ‘ divert my mind by a variety which would serve at
 ‘ once to amuse and please.

‘ The levity of my aunt often alarmed me,
 ‘ through a regard for her reputation and an appre-
 ‘ hension that the malignant interpretations of a cen-
 ‘ sorious world might ultimately affect myself. I had
 ‘ often observed with pain, that since the death of
 ‘ my parents she had been less cautious of attending
 ‘ to appearances than formerly. Untroubled, and
 ‘ no longer subject to restraint, she gave full scope
 ‘ to the natural volatility of her disposition, to the
 ‘ indulgence of her passions and the gratification of
 ‘ her appetites.

‘ ‘ Our house, furnished with every conveniency
 ‘ for luxury and dissipation, was a general rendez-
 ‘ vous for the gay, the thoughtless, and the libidinous.
 ‘ The general vices of Europe rendered still more
 ‘ contemptible by a conjunction with the weakness
 ‘ and effeminacy of the East, seemed to have fixed
 ‘ their empire in our habitation, where alone they
 ‘ reigned with unfading lustre, and where they bade
 ‘ defiance to the attacks of Reason and the laws of
 ‘ Morality.

‘ I did not however find, that my aunt in the least
 ‘ abated in her respect for me. She still treated me
 ‘ with a kindness which shewed an unalterable re-
 ‘ gard and affection. It is true, her passions would
 ‘ at times break out in a manner which shewed me
 ‘ what I had to fear, should I, by a disobedience to
 ‘ her commands, attempt to put any restraint upon
 ‘ her inclinations ; but, as I had no wish to displease
 ‘ her, whilst she kept within the bounds of decency
 ‘ and continued to treat me with the civility the

‘ nearness of my relationship to her intiled me to,
 ‘ I was under no apprehensions either of meeting
 ‘ with her anger or incurring her disdain.

‘ By the prudent management of those intrusted
 ‘ with my father’s affairs, the surplus of his estate,
 ‘ after satisfying every demand of a public or private
 ‘ nature, was so far from proving inconsiderable,
 ‘ that I found myself in possession of a fortune great,
 ‘ infinitely so beyond my desires.

‘ This addition to my wealth, however, afforded
 ‘ me no addition to my happiness. Riches I con-
 ‘ sidered as no further useful, than as they tended to
 ‘ empower a generous mind in the distribution of
 ‘ those aids denied the sons and daughters of poverty,
 ‘ in promoting the felicity of mankind, and in en-
 ‘ deavouring to avert the stroke of misfortune from
 ‘ falling on the head of undeserving indigence.

‘ During the first two years in which I was un-
 ‘ der the direction of my aunt, I saw little alteration
 ‘ in her conduct. Eager in her search for pleasures,
 ‘ she was indifferent in respect to the opinion of the
 ‘ world; contenting herself with the enjoyments
 ‘ she deduced from sensual attachments, she paid lit-
 ‘ tle attention to me, but giving me full permission
 ‘ to pass my time in the manner which I best chose,
 ‘ she existed only in a course of dissipation, which
 ‘ was at once as weak as reprehensible.

‘ Devoted body and soul to her service, her do-
 ‘ mestic and attendants were alone studious of her
 ‘ pleasures and desires, and although she was no
 ‘ longer the favourite of a prince, from their as-
 ‘ siduities she was still in receipt of more than
 ‘ princely adulation, with which gross incense she
 ‘ was elevated above herself, and more and more
 ‘ rendered contemptible in the unclouded eyes of
 ‘ candour and rationality.

‘ Fed by such fulsome flatteries, she in a manner
 ‘ forgot herself, and, confiding in the praises offered
 ‘ her

‘ her by her creatures and sycophants, injudiciously
 ‘ fancied she was no longer bound to confine herself
 ‘ within the limits circumscribed by human wisdom
 ‘ for the preservation of temporal right, but sacrific-
 ‘ ing to her passions she proceeded from step to step
 ‘ to the final attainment of every gratification sub-
 ‘ versive of Prudence, Reason, and Morality.

‘ Every day began at length to display some scene
 ‘ more daring than the preceding. Led away by a
 ‘ mistaken notion of happiness founded upon the basis
 ‘ of earthly pleasure, she hourly gave example of a
 ‘ depravity of inclination and a profligacy of man-
 ‘ ners inexcusable even in the most savage disposi-
 ‘ tion, and such as indicated a total absence of reflec-
 ‘ tion and heart entirely estranged to the principles
 ‘ of humanity.

‘ I had often observed, that amongst the many
 ‘ new faces which her wiles and artifices had made
 ‘ subservient to her pleasures, few, if any, continued
 ‘ long in her favour. In a moment, without allow-
 ‘ ing them to reflect on their folly, in the hour of
 ‘ dissipation and in the midst of their dream of hap-
 ‘ piness, rendered more pleasing by the persuasion of
 ‘ fancied security, they have been hurried away, no
 ‘ one knew whither, to make room one for who had
 ‘ probably no other recommendation than novelty,
 ‘ and who, pleased with the partiality shewn him,
 ‘ has foolishly imagined that his felicity was durable
 ‘ and immortal.

‘ Mamoud, who beheld her conduct with detes-
 ‘ tation and abhorrence, though unable properly to
 ‘ express his indignation at her proceeding, at length
 ‘ made me acquainted with some part of her actions
 ‘ and behaviour, which at once filled me with asto-
 ‘ nishment and the most poignant uneasiness.

‘ He informed me that my aunt, when grown
 ‘ fatiated with her admirers, would unexpectedly,

' in the dead of the night, convey them, how much
 ' soever against their will, to a house she had pur-
 ' chased about twenty miles off, where, attended
 ' by those only who had sworn to obey her com-
 ' mands, she dispatched them as the credulous vic-
 ' tims of her lust, "*to that bourn, from whence no*
 ' "*traveller returns,*" and where she was assured they
 ' could never be by their re-appearance operate to
 ' the prejudice of her character or the interruption
 ' of her sensuality.

' I was thunderstruck with the intelligence he had
 ' communicated to me, and was determined no
 ' longer to remain under the roof of a monster who
 ' was capable of the blackest crimes, and who would
 ' stick at nothing in the indulgence of her passions,
 ' or the gratification of her desires.

' Convinced of her propensity to wickedness,
 ' which appeared to be grafted in her very soul, I
 ' was even fearful of my own safety. I longed moreo-
 ' ver to visit England, of which I had so frequently
 ' heard my parents speak as the land of liberty and
 ' the residence of every social virtue. This incli-
 ' nation determined me to take the first opportunity
 ' of making my escape from her and trusting to
 ' Providence for an agreeable settlement, remote
 ' from a place which seemed with so many crimes
 ' as seemed to realize the fables of old, and bid
 ' defiance to the judgement and justice of the Al-
 ' mighty.

' I had not formed this determination many hours
 ' before Mamoud acquainted me, that this stain to
 ' her sex had procured another victim, who, it was
 ' more than probable, would in a few days share the
 ' fate of those who had gone before him, and, un-
 ' less prevented, swell the catalogue of her iniquities
 ' by afresh murder.

My blood ran chill at the idea, and I was re-
 ' solved, if possible, to prevent it. I enquired par-
 ' ticularly

‘ particularly into the circumstances of this new amour,
 ‘ and learnt with pleasure, that the present object of
 ‘ her passion had resolution sufficient to withstand
 ‘ her solicitations, and to treat her scheme of pleasure
 ‘ with the contempt so gross and improbable a system
 ‘ merited.

‘ I was likewise given to understand, that highly
 ‘ exasperated at the mortification arising from so un-
 ‘ expected and unusual a disappointment to her hopes,
 ‘ she had decreed, that he should experience her
 ‘ power and the weight of her resentment, which
 ‘ thereat she had in part executed by committing
 ‘ him bound to a noisome dungeon, where he had
 ‘ then existed upwards of a fortnight, without a hope
 ‘ of relief from the interference of any other power
 ‘ than that of death.

‘ I enquired still further respecting the station of
 ‘ the person who had so unfortunately fallen into
 ‘ the snare which she had laid for the unwary and
 ‘ imprudent, but who, I hoped, would persevere,
 ‘ whatever might be the consequence, to reject her
 ‘ overtures and withstand the many temptations
 ‘ which it might be expected she would throw in
 ‘ the way of his ambition, and thereby preserve in-
 ‘ violate the esteem such conduct merited in the
 ‘ hearts of the good and virtuous.

‘ By the means of Mamoud I learnt, in reply,
 ‘ that he was a gentleman who had arrived in India
 ‘ in a public capacity, and who proposed returning
 ‘ soon to England, for which purpose he was mak-
 ‘ ing every preparation when this unhappy accident
 ‘ happened to defeat his intentions and render every
 ‘ fond idea, which he had probably flattered himself
 ‘ with speedily realizing, vain and nugatory.

‘ Having thus made myself mistress of every ne-
 ‘ cessary particular relative to his family and con-
 ‘ nections, I enquired of Mamoud in what manner

82 THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

‘ there appeared the greatest probability of succour-
 ‘ ing him, which I not only wished to do from a
 ‘ principle of humanity, but the more so, as I hoped
 ‘ thereby to effect what I had so long and unprofitably
 ‘ sighed for, I mean—*a visit to England.*

‘ Mamoud, after having dwelt a considerable time
 ‘ on the dangers attending an attempt of that sort,
 ‘ informed me that he was ready to risk his life in
 ‘ my service whenever I should please to put his
 ‘ fidelity to the trial, and that if I would suffer myself
 ‘ to be governed by him, he would be answerable
 ‘ to execute whatever I might enjoin him to
 ‘ the performance of, with the same zeal as he would
 ‘ serve himself.

‘ Thoroughly satisfied of his sincerity, I willingly
 ‘ submitted myself to his direction, nor have I
 ‘ the least reason to repent of the confidence I placed
 ‘ in him, or the commission I left to his management.

‘ Early the following morning he provided a palanquin,
 ‘ upon which, with the assistance of some
 ‘ Moors, he conveyed me to the antiquated mansion
 ‘ which my aunt had chosen as the scene of her
 ‘ barbarities.

‘ I beheld it with horror, and so strong an impression
 ‘ did Mamoud’s intelligence make upon me,
 ‘ that I trembled with apprehension as I approached
 ‘ it, unable to conform myself with a resolution
 ‘ suitable to the occasion of my visit.

‘ My aunt was astonished at my presence so unexpectedly
 ‘ and without invitation, and unable to suppress her
 ‘ anger, she enquired with some emotion, what was my
 ‘ intention, and what the urgent business that drew me
 ‘ thither?

‘ I answered her, with a dissimulation justifiable
 ‘ only in the consideration of the commendable motive
 ‘ which influenced my conduct, that finding myself

‘ myself at a loss to account for her absence so long,
 ‘ and being apprehensive that she was ill, I could
 ‘ no longer refrain from some enquiry respecting
 ‘ her, by which means I had gained the knowledge
 ‘ of her residence, and was come in conformity to
 ‘ my duty to pay my respects to her.

‘ I could easily perceive, that my presence was
 ‘ productive of very visible uneasiness to her, and
 ‘ that she would gladly have dispensed with my at-
 ‘ tendance at so critical a juncture, for reasons which
 ‘ I could very readily guess at.

‘ However, as there was no method of remedy-
 ‘ ing it, and as she could not well shew any resent-
 ‘ ment at a measure which seemed to owe its birth
 ‘ to duty and affection, she made a virtue of neces-
 ‘ sity, and gave me a welcome, which, however
 ‘ cool, was nevertheless as much as I could expect
 ‘ from a mind already suffering under the sting of
 ‘ disappointment and overwhelmed with the mortifi-
 ‘ cation arising from pride insulted and power con-
 ‘ temned.

“ At night, with the assistance of Mamoud, I
 ‘ gained the mastery of the dungeon, where I found
 ‘ you, Sir, in a manner which you yourself are the
 ‘ best able to describe. You know the remainder
 ‘ of that adventure, but cannot from the most im-
 ‘ perfect idea of the joy I experienced in setting you
 ‘ at liberty. It was in short such as no tongue can
 ‘ describe, nor no pencil can paint!

‘ The instant you was missed, my aunt was like
 ‘ one distracted: she flew up and down the house
 ‘ like a fury: she raved herself into incoherency and
 ‘ madness, and could not without difficulty be re-
 ‘ strained from laying violent hands upon herself.

‘ I afterwards learnt, that the very night of your
 ‘ escape was that which she had decreed should be
 ‘ your last, and had not Heaven providentially put

84 THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

‘ it into my mind to attempt your delivery, it is
 ‘ more than probable that you would, before this,
 ‘ have been mixed with your mother earth, as in-
 ‘ sensible to the pleasures as the pains of mortality,
 ‘ and no longer subject to the cares and the troubles
 ‘ incidental to a life of vexation, grief, and uneasi-
 ‘ nefs.

‘ As her passions subsided, her jealousy increased :
 ‘ she suspected that I was concerned in your escape,
 ‘ yet was so circumstanced as to be unwilling to pro-
 ‘ ceed to interrogatories, fearful of the event of en-
 ‘ quiries which might in the end terminate to her
 ‘ own disadvantage, and which at best could not
 ‘ possibly afford either food for her vanity, or mat-
 ‘ ter for her revenge.

‘ She had, however, been liberal in her threats
 ‘ of executing the most severe punishment upon any
 ‘ one whom she might detect in having favoured
 ‘ your flight, and as Mamoud had not since been
 ‘ heard of, he was concluded to have been one, if
 ‘ not the principal instrument of her disappoint-
 ‘ ment, and as such, was for ever debarred the hope
 ‘ of regaining her favour. In the mean time every
 ‘ engine was employed that promised to facilitate
 ‘ the means of getting you once more in her pow-
 ‘ er ; nor have I any doubt of her success, had you
 ‘ continued much longer on shore, exposed as you
 ‘ thereby were to her artifices and desperate machi-
 ‘ nations, and incapable of withstanding or even dis-
 ‘ covering the many nets she would have spread for
 ‘ your hurt and final destruction.

‘ Finding there was no probability of expecting
 ‘ any peace or security with a woman of such infam-
 ‘ ous principles, I was confirmed in my former de-
 ‘ termination of leaving her, and of relying on your
 ‘ generosity for a passage to Europe.—I am happy
 ‘ that I have not been mistaken in the opinion I
 ‘ formed

‘ formed of your honour, and shall with pleasure
 ‘ pursue a voyage which procures me the protection
 ‘ of a gentleman who is engaged to afford it me, if
 ‘ not by inclination, at least by every obligation of
 ‘ friendship, honour, and gratitude.’

C H A P. XI.

Reflections on the Uncertainty of human Determinations. Description of a Sea-Fight. The Death of Maria. An Arrival in England. A Provision against the Accidents of Fortune, and a long Absence repaid in the Endearments of Conjugal Love.

“ HAVING finished her history, I thanked her for the trouble she had been at in the recital, and greatly pleased to think I had so luckily escaped the dangers which so immediately surrounded me, I thought I should never sufficiently have expressed the sincerity of my gratitude to her, due from the recollection of the service she had rendered me, a service which had restored me from the jaws of death to the enjoyment of liberty, life, and fortune.

“ In return for the ready compliance she had shewn to my request, I presented her with the particulars of my life, together with the history of my marriage, which she heard with attention and moistened with a tear, as a token of sensibility due to our unfortunate loves.

“ My Fanny too did not go without her share of praise. Her beauties and her thousand amiable qualities gained upon my tongue in a transport of joy, impossible to be conceived by the cold, dull heart of senseless indifference, and such as only sprung from the genuine effusions of a soul warmed into admiration by the knowledge of her worth and a sense of her virtues.

“ Maria heard the encomium of my Fanny with pleasure.

pleasure, and wished herself happy in her friendship and acquaintance; a wish I most sincerely joined in from an observation I had made of a similarity of disposition in the two, which promised the most permanent establishment, and such as, if grafted on sentiment, bade fair to outlive the turf which moulders on the coffins of the proud and scornful.

“ But alas, how vain are the speculations of mere mortals! We look forwards in expectation of happiness, when, upon the very eve of enjoyment, we find ourselves fatally disappointed andwhelmed in the ruins which our narrow eyes, incapable of stretching beyond the bounds of earthly prospects, never descried, or blinded by the mist of ignorance, they could never be sufficiently armed against.

“ Hence the romantic dreams of age: toiling and toiling without a moment to spare, laying up for futurity without partaking of the pleasures of present enjoyment.—

“ *Till life flies from us like an idle dream,*” and shews us that all our care is covetousness, and all our prudence founded on the basis of interest and insatiable avarice.

“ In this manner Maria was pleasing herself with the idea of establishing an unalterable friendship with my wife: it was an innocent idea, and I was myself happy in encouraging her in an expectation so probable; till in a single moment, every determination, formed by too creative an imagination, was for ever lost in the ocean of misfortune and disappointment.

“ It was in the midst of a bloody and expensive war betwixt France and England, that we were pursuing our passage, and scarcely had we got clear of the bay of Bengal, before we perceived a ship crowding all her sails and bearing down upon us in a manner which plainly shewed us their intentions.

“ As ours, however, was a fine vessel, and no
ways

ways deficient either in men, arms, or ammunition, the captain bravely, though imprudently, resolved to exchange a shot with them whatever might be the consequence to his employers or passengers, and in conformity to his resolution gave instant orders for clearing the decks and making every preparation for an engagement.

“The men, with an activity and readiness really astonishing and such as plainly spoke their approbation of the service, executed his orders to a tittle, and every thing being now prepared, we lay to, in expectation of their coming, and with the intention of giving them a warm reception.

“I cautioned Maria, upon no pretence to make her appearance, but to compose herself as well as she could below till the event was known. As for me, my honour forbade my secreting myself at a time when my country required my little services, and when we were all exposed to dangers which asked every assistance to avert.

“I was, it is true, under some apprehension in respect to Maria, as she had invariably adhered to her disguise, which would, I perceived, in our present situation, unfortunately operate to her prejudice.

“Neither had I just then opportunity or inclination to devulge a secret of such importance to the captain, which might have accounted for the fears that were but too evidently impressed on her countenance, and might have reconciled that officer to a conduct somewhat incompatible with the character she usurped.

“In about half an hour after we had waited in expectation of them, the enemy approached within pistol shot, and gave us an opportunity of being satisfied of her rank and strength.

“She mounted sixty-four carriage guns and appeared in every respect so formidable that the captain began

began to repent of his ardour ; but however, as repentance would avail little, situated as we then were, he ordered every man to his post, and in a few seconds the engagement began.

“ It was as bloody a one for the time it lasted, as that sea was ever witness to. Two thirds of our men were either killed or wounded, and the whole ship bore more resemblance of a slaughter-house than that of any one thing besides.

“ Of the enemy’s loss it is impossible properly to form an estimate ; but from circumstances it should appear to far from inconsiderable. Their sails cut into atoms, their main-mast sprung by the board, and their whole appearance gave the most incontestible proof of horror and massacre.

“ In the heat of the action, whilst both sides were vigorously employed in an obstinate exertion of their power and bravery, Maria, who was terrified with the noise of the artillery and the cries of the wounded, unmindful of the council I had offered her and unmindful of the regard she ought to have cherished for her own safety, wildly flew upon deck ; she looked round in vain for me, and not perceiving me concluded I was amongst the dead.

“ Frantic with this imagination, she ran up and down making the most lamentable cries, exposed to every danger and insensible to the horrors which on every hand surrounded her.

“ In this manner did she fly from place to place, unceasing in her tears and loud in her exclamations, till a ball from the enemy in a moment extended her at her length and deprived her of her life.

“ Heavens ! what did I experience the instant I was informed of her destiny !— It is too much ! — It surpasses description !

“ Mahmoud, who was a melancholy evidence of my sorrows, assisted me in the tribute of affection
paid

paid to the memory of his mistress's virtues : it was a tribute due to her many perfections, to her humanity, and to her thousand amiable qualities.

" I ran over in mind the obligations I lay under to her, the restoration of my liberty and the preservation of my life : I saw her cut off untimely in the infancy of her days and in the bloom of beauty ; I saw it with pain, and I melted at the recollection.

" It was in vain I endeavoured to comfort myself with the reflection that I was no was accessary to her misfortunes. Her untimely end perpetually intruded on my mind, and I as often accused myself with ingratitude in not having continued with her during an action, which it was but natural to suppose could not fail of subjecting her to the impressions of terror.

" After the engagement had continued for the space of three glasses, the enemy, tired of attempting any longer to subdue us by force of their superior numbers made off. We were not in a condition to pursue them, as the loss we had already sustained was much more than we knew well how to bear, and should we be able to make ourselves master of them, we had not hands sufficient to navigate a ship of her size to Europe.

" These considerations induced us to relinquish every further attempt and simply content ourselves with the honour we had purchased in an action, where, in spite of the disadvantages we laboured under in having to encounter a greater weight of metal and a superiority of numbers, we nevertheless so far triumphed as to oblige them to leave us without effecting the intention of their visit.

" We met with nothing worth relating during the rest of our voyage, which we compleated in much shorter time than usual, and arrived in England towards the latter end of the year, much to the satisfaction of every one on board.

" The

“ The jewels Maria had intrusted me with, I had treasured with the greatest care, and was only miserable in the reflection that she was no longer capable of receiving them from me.

“ Their uncommon value rendered me undetermined in what manner I ought to dispose of them. My honour would not permit me to appropriate them to my own emolument, and as I was ignorant of any relation she had in Europe to whom I might deliver them, I knew not how to act.

“ I determined however to visit the island of Jersey, for the purpose of finding if Monsieur Ducane had left any one of his family to whom I might with propriety present the precious relics of a fortune rendered more valuable in having once belonged to one of the most worthy of her sex. Should I be so happy as to succeed in my endeavours, I doubted not but such an acquisition would prove acceptable, and the pleasure I promised myself in having it in my power to bestow the blessing of competency on an individual, was nothing inferior to that which I might have experienced in the actual possession of every satisfaction which the most avaricious could possibly sigh for.

“ By an invariable attention to commerce I had, during my last short residence in India, gained a considerable addition to my fortune, which I was the more pleased with as it afforded me the means of providing for my Fanny in a manner more suitable to my affection and her merits.

“ I wished to make her independent of the world, which was the more necessary as the way of life in which I was, against my inclination, engaged, subjected me to a thousand accidents, every one of which would affect her more or less as she was dependent upon me for a subsistence.

“ The humanity of the unfeeling part of mankind I knew to be superior to every other quality : de-
void

void of candour or charity they view every thing with a malignant eye, and are only happy as they find food for their illiberality and ill-nature.

“ Convinced as I was of my Fanny’s excellencies and the natural goodness of her heart, I was nevertheless miserable when I reflected on the misfortunes to which she was exposed by my absence, and the uncharitable insinuations of those who, strangers themselves to virtue, maliciously interpret every action however innocent, or even exemplary, into something criminal, and endeavour to blacken every character with the infamy which alone belongs to themselves.

“ Reflecting on this, I was determined to set her on a footing which might bid defiance to the finger of reproach, and whereby she might stand unmoved amidst the scorn of the proud and the censure of the vain.—

“ Being at length safely landed once more in England, I repaired to Lord Meanwell, who received me in a manner which shewed how great a share I possessed in his esteem. He asked a thousand questions in respect to the situation of my affairs, to all which, I returned him the most satisfactory answers I was capable of, and with which he appeared greatly pleased.

“ As I was unwilling to give him cause of suspicion, I deferred my visit to Fanny till the morning, for the speedy arrival of which I prayed with the most fervent zeal and eagerness.

“ Early on the succeeding day I set out for her abode, which I soon reached and in a few minutes found myself in her arms, amply recompenced for all the pain I had endured in so long an absence, and raised at once superior to the frowns of fortune, and the stings of disappointment.

CHAP. XII.

The Delicacies of mutual Passion. The Excess of fatherly Affection, and another Trip to the Oriental World.

“IT is impossible to express the joy I experienced at this meeting : it was a happiness I had long been wishing for, and on which my every hope was immoveably fixed.

“ During the whole time of our separation, my affections had never wandered even a moment from her, the object of my earliest passion, and whom I still loved with a purity of sentiment which nothing could change or in the least diminish.

“ The broken sighs, and half-formed syllables, the instantaneous and involuntary exclamations and expressions of joy which escaped us in the first period of our transport, gave the most incontrovertible proofs of a reality of passion unknown to the mere sensualist, and only to be imagined by those hearts which are acquainted with the refinements of mutual affection and the delicacies of conjugal love.

“ And am I indeed blessed once more with the sight of thee ?” said she, “ Gracious Heaven, accept my thanks !——long, very long have I sighed for this happiness, and when I least expected it, I am in an Instant restored to the enjoyment of every blessing which this world can afford me, in the possession of thee—my lord !——my husband !”

“ The emotion of her soul was too great, and she was unable to proceed.

“ Perceiving how much she was agitated, I endeavoured to compose her spirits by reminding her, that I expected to have had the pleasure of embracing
ing

ing our little offspring, in whose innocent caresses I hoped to enjoy the recollection of our former loves and to experience the pleasing satisfaction arising from fatherly regard.

“ In less time than I had taken to make known my desire, I beheld them before me. Let those who can form a right conception of the transport and tenderness which must actuate the breast of a parent in such a situation, guess what I felt!—It was such as bids defiance to the powers of description and borrows no graces from the pencil of science.

“ My Edward!—my Louisa!—names for ever dear to this heart,—with what rapture did I behold your growing beauties!—I saw in you, all that could help to convey delight to the fond breast of a father!—I perceived in you every increasing excellence that seemed calculated to flatter the partiality of a parent, and I embraced you with an ardour which could only exist in the sincerity of paternal affection and the excess of indulgent tenderness.

“ The satisfaction I experienced in the contemplation of their innocence, was amply shared by my Fanny, who was doubly pleased to behold my fondness for her children, as it betokened the continuance of my love for herself. I thought I should never have been tired of gazing on them. I endeavoured to direct my attention to some other object, but vain was the attempt, my fancy still dwelt upon the fruits of our loves, and I was lost in a transport of delight.

“ I remained a fond partaker in these domestic joys undisturbed by the encroachments of vulgar passions and prejudices, until my memory called me to a recollection of the fair though unfortunate Maria.

“ The task I had voluntarily enjoined myself to the performance of, relative to the disposal of her jewels, I thought it now time to put into execution.

“ I had

“ I had made my Fanny acquainted with her virtues and the singular obligations I lay under to her, and we had mingled our tears together as a token of our regard for her worth and as a tribute devoted to her misfortunes.

“ A generous mind never fails to sympathize with, and feel for the distresses of the unfortunate. Just so it was with my wife ; she saw how greatly I bewailed the accident which bereaved me of Maria, and she heartily joined in lamenting a circumstance which deprived me of a cheerful moment.

“ Having dispatched a trusty messenger to Jersey, I there learnt that Monsieur Ducane had no relation living on that island, nor could I gain any intelligence which promised to afford me an opportunity of fulfilling my intention.

“ I confess, that so far from being pleased with this information, I was exceedingly uneasy, as the jewels would only serve to remind me of a loss which never failed of making me melancholy, and which no resolution of mine, however maturely formed, could overcome, or thoroughly disperse.

“ As I could not, upon repeated enquiries, hear of any one who of right was intitled to them, I at last determined to sell them, and appropriate the money arising therefrom to the purpose of purchasing an annuity for Fanny.

“ This was what I had long wished to execute ; and happy in an opportunity that gave me the means thereof, I sold them for the sum of thirteen thousand pounds, which I laid out in a manner that promised to render my wife in future independent of the world, and to afford her a shelter from the accidents of fortune and from the hand of want.

“ It was with the utmost reluctance she could be prevailed upon to receive such a mark of my regard.
She

She begged that I would refrain from a proof, which though expressive of my love, was yet such as she could not accept without pain.

“ It was a delicate struggle, and I was forced to insist on her compliance, which at length ended in the manner I wished.

“ My uncle, who had not entirely relinquished his matrimonial plottings in my favour, determined to try once more how I was inclined to relish his scheme, which he had so urgently though vainly recommended before to me.

“ I assured him that my sentiments remained immoveably the same, nor was there any fear that they would change.

“ The old peer was rather mortified at my obstinacy, and the cavalier manner in which I had treated his proposal—and naturally attributed my behaviour to a prepossession in favour of some one of inferior birth, and whose family and connections had made me ashamed to acquaint him with my passion.

“ In consequence of this persuasion, he reminded me of the voluntary promise I had made him, and gave me to understand, that he expected I should sacredly observe what I had so deliberately pledged my honour to the performance of.

“ I blushed at the recollection of what my passion had prompted me to: it was the sudden impulse arising from the conviction of having done wrong.— By *WRONG* I mean not *marrying*, but in having unnecessary bound myself unasked and unsolicited to *that* which my inclination, my love, and my affection, all alike rendered impossible for me to abide by.

“ This conversation with his Lordship gave me however to see the inflexibility of his disposition, and how exceedingly difficult it would be ever to reconcile

cile him to a measure which was so contrary to his wish, his will, and his approbation.

“ Indifferent in respect to the opinion he might form of the motive that induced me to a behaviour, apparently so extraordinary, I more than ever determined to keep my marriage a secret from him. I knew he would be unwearied in his endeavours to discover what it was my desire to conceal, and impressed with this belief, I was extremely cautious in my motions, and acted in every respect in a manner the most likely to avoid suspicion, and so as to ensure a continuance of the happiness which I had so long uninterruptedly enjoyed with my Fanny.

“ Mamoud to whose fidelity I had been so much indebted as to render it difficult for me to make him a recompence adequate to his merit and the extent of my own inclination, was still with me. His assiduity and obliging disposition endeared him more and more to my affection, and I took every opportunity to convince him of my invariable esteem, and of the sense I entertained of his past services.

“ The acknowledgement he made to these expressions of my regard, was artless and unconstrained, and such as spoke his sincerity in terms beyond the reach of art or the polished periods of grace or elocution.——

“ To keep Lord Meanwell in ignorance of my matrimonial connections, I advised Fanny to procure the children a place in the country, where they might be taken care of without running any hazard of detection from the vigilance of his Lordship, who, I was fearful, had some suspicion of the real cause of my aversion to his desire, and would in consequence thereof exert every endeavour to promote a discovery.

“ By the care we mutually observed, we soon heard of a retired situation within a few miles of town,

town, agreeable to the wishes we had formed, and such as promised to afford every convenience which we sought for, equally in respect to health, air, or privacy.

“ Here, much to our satisfaction, we placed our little Edward and Louisa, who every day discovered some new perfection, and visibly encreased in strength and beauty, which was seen by their fond parents with all the transport naturally arising from a prospect so flattering. —

“ I had now continued in England a full year, when my presence became once more necessary in India.

“ To describe the scene at parting would be as difficult as unnecessary, as it was but a repetition of what I have before described.

“ My Fanny was again urgent with me to permit her to accompany me, which however I powerfully opposed, and was determined upon no account to give my consent to.

“ Recommending Louisa to her care and tenderness, I proposed taking Edward with me, as his presence would serve to preserve in my mind the remembrance of the joys I had once been partaker of with my Fanny, and help to disperse the anxieties which might otherwise intrude upon my quiet in the hour of reflection and in the day of trouble.

“ My wife used no endeavour to oppose my inclination, as she well knew that my tenderness for him was nothing inferior to her own ; and as she had the satisfaction of retaining Louisa, she the more willingly reconciled herself to the loss of her son, for whose voyage I began making every necessary preparation.

“ Lord Meanwell was happy at finding me so readily disposed to return to Asia : he considered my

my facility as a proof of the obedience I owed to his pleasure, and the sense I retained of his kindness and attention to my interest.

“ As I had settled my Fanny in a state of independency, I was the less afflicted at the thoughts of leaving her. She was now in possession of a competency sufficient to supply all her wishes, and even such as would indulge her beyond her disposition or desires. She was agreeably situated at home, her house replete with every convenience, and her domestics faithful to her interest, and she had nothing to lament but the accident which separated us and the cruelty of our fate, which hindered us from publicly declaring a connection which originated in love and subsisted in invariable affection.

“ Having taken leave of Lord Meanwell, who gave me a plenitude of advice, in respect to the regulation of my conduct, and the advancement of my fortune, I repaired to my Fanny, who was bathed in tears at the prospect of my so speedy departure.

“ I endeavoured to allay her grief by the promise of seeing her again as soon as my affairs would permit, and accompanied by my little Edward, whom with difficulty I severed from the embraces of his mother, I repaired on board.

“ I shall avoid all unnecessary description, and only remark, that in a few hours after our embarkation, the wind proving favourable, we set sail and safely arrived with very little accident, once more, at the place of our destination.

C H A P. XIII.

An Attempt at domestic Caracature. Food for the Ambitious. The Tear of Sensibility not to be despised. A Visit to a Daughter, and a melancholy Prediction.

“**T**EDIOUS as the voyage was, my little Edward enjoyed his health uninterruptedly, a circumstance which administered the most pleasing satisfaction to his fond father, whose every hope was divided betwixt his love for his wife and his affection for his children.

“ With the utmost care I attended to his education, and had the happiness to perceive the most promising expectancies in return for my labour, which I flattered myself with finding repaid with an abundant harvest.—

“ Eight years did I continue in India, nor was I in that time inattentive to my fortune, which I greatly increased, and which only afforded me pleasure, as it gave me the means to make a provision for these I loved above every other thing this world afforded.

“ During this interval, I heard often from my wife, whose expressions bespoke an invariable passion, impossible for time to alter or in the least diminish. The joy I experienced at those proofs of her affection surpasses the description; nor were my replies less calculated to convince her of a mutual regard, which I more than ever cherished, and which I was determined to preserve as the dearest and most incontestable proof of my unalterable love.

“ At the expiration of this period, I once more returned to England, and found my happiness renewed in the possession of her whom it was my wish and my study to please and oblige.

“ The reception I met with from her was equal

to my most flattering ideas, and even superior to my expectation.

“ Notwithstanding the time that had elapsed since I first had been blessed with the sight of her, she had undergone very little alteration, either in mind or person.

“ Her beauty was yet in its meridian : the roses of her cheeks were still blooming and in a state of unfading excellence, and the brilliancy of her eyes put the skill of the lapidary to the blush.

“ The serenity of her soul was alone a fit companion for the perfections of her person. Superior to the low groveling passions which actuate the breasts of the vain and vulgar, and unacquainted with the narrow prejudices which guide the determinations of the mean and interested, she towered with a dignity of deportment that at once rebuked the busy tongue of licentiousness into silence and respect, and impressed the spectator with an opinion of her worth and an admiration of her virtues.

“ I had thought it best to leave Edward behind. Familiarized to the East, he had no conception of his native land, nor had he remaining any recollection of the scenes of his infancy.

“ Former transactions appeared to him as a dream, and, happy in his forgetfulness, I considered this circumstance as the most fortunate that could happen, as he was now in his thirteenth year, and I wished him to pursue his commercial attempts, to the road of which young as he was, I had already introduced him, and which could not fail in the end of proving beneficial to his interest.

“ Fanny indeed was herein greatly disappointed, as she had fixed her heart on seeing him, and her uneasiness at finding her expectations deceived was almost inexpressible. Her fondness for her children made her interpret my conduct into an unkindness which

which my heart was a stranger to, and it was with the utmost difficulty she could at last be prevailed upon to bestow her commendations upon a measure so contrary to her wish.

“ Lord Meanwell was still living, and though bowed down with care and infirmities, was as anxious as ever to increase his possessions, which, from the parsimony of his disposition, were extensive and valuable.

“ It was not the fear of his disinheriting me that hindered me from making him acquainted with my marriage, as I had by my industry accumulated a fortune equal to my every wish and far superior to my wants; but I was deterred therefrom by a recollection of the promise I had given him, which, voluntarily made, doubly bound me in an adherence to.

“ I could not reconcile myself to the idea of affording his Lordship reason to upbraid me with so manifest a breach of my word, deliberately given, unsolicited, and unrequired, and which he would consider as doubly criminal, in having so long withheld from his knowledge.

“ This consideration led me to persevere in my original plan of concealment; and observing the same caution in my visits to my wife as formerly, I passed as I wished,—unsuspected and unknown.

“ I had now remained in England some months, when my uncle, who seemed determined, that I should not eat the bread of idleness, by his interest with the *proprietary*, procured me the government of a considerable settlement, which, averse so ever as I was to a measure that tore me from the arms of my Fanny, I could not by any means refuse, seeing he was actuated therein as usual, only by a regard for my welfare, and the advancement of my interest.

“ Possessed already of more than sufficient, I wished to continue in Europe, unexposed to the dangers of tempestuous seas and the unwholesomeness of climates, which somehow unaccountably struck me more forcibly than I had before experienced, and presented horrors to my imagination with which I was till then totally unacquainted.

“ My Fanny too joined in condemning the ambitious views of his Lordship, from whose fatal friendship I was doomed to undergo a repetition of the dangers which, even in idea, appeared to her in colours pregnant with destruction, and such as gave no opportunity for an admission of hope.

“ Impressed with the picture of those evils, we involuntarily and insensibly melted into tears; it was a weakness I was no ways ashamed of; it was the sacrifice of sensibility to the memory of our unfortunate loves, and it was a mark of humanity which would add lustre to the eye of a monarch.

“ The distinguished character in which I was about to depart required a considerable time to make the necessary preparations. This interval I employed in attempting to reconcile myself to a voyage which asked more resolution to effect than I was then master of. It was with difficulty that I could bear to reflect on it, as every time my imagination dwelt thereon, I was tortured with fears which entirely unmanned me, and rendered me the most miserable of human beings.

“ During the whole time of my being at home, I had never seen Louisa, simply contenting myself with the information I received of her welfare and the report of her growing excellencies.

“ This neglect of mine was not occasioned by any want of natural affection for her, but was the effect of my caution, which would not permit me to hazard a detection which might in a moment subject
me

me to *that*, which I had ever been so careful to avert.

“ However, as my Fanny prudently conjectured, that it would be impossible to attend to her education, and instruct her in the accomplishments proper for her sex, situated as she then was, I readily acquiesced with her desire of having her at home, which, nevertheless, I begged might be deferred till the eve of my departure, when I promised to accompany her for that purpose, and be myself a witness of those charms which I was unacquainted with only from report.

“ Expecting now every day to receive a summons to prepare for my departure, I reminded Fanny of my willingness to attend her to the scene of my Louisa’s rustication. This was an offer she gladly accepted, and the chariot being got in readiness, we were presently conveyed to the hut which was to give me a view of her, whom I could not behold without the sweetest emotions of tenderness, transport, and delight.

“ The expectation I had formed of her, and the picture which her mother’s partiality had impressed upon my imagination, were infinitely exceeded by the graces which her presence presented to my inspection; they were indeed such as we rarely met with in the raw, untutored behaviour of unpolished innocence, but seemed to borrow their birth from a familiarity with real grandeur and an acquaintance with the world.

“ I tenderly embraced her, whilst she, ignorant of my character, blushed with an enchanting modesty, much easier to be fancied than described, and which gave an addition to her beauties, as impossible to imitate, as difficult to express.

“ Let those who are acquainted with the feelings of a parent, judge what I experienced in this inter-

view ! The remembrance thereof thrills pleasingly through my veins even at this moment !

“ My wife, who beheld my transport with a joy little inferior to my own, roused me from the reverie of thought which the scene had thrown me into, by reminding me of the business which had called us thither.

“ I understood her reproof, and soon after we all set out on our return to town.

“ The mutual satisfaction this little excursion afforded, made me more than ever averse to my intended voyage. I could not think of quitting those I so tenderly loved without the most poignant uneasiness ; the reflection of which added horror to my soul, and imbittered every pleasure which I otherwise should have enjoyed.

“ In a few days I was made acquainted with the expected summons, which called me from the domestic joys which I had so long been partaker of, and bade me prepare once more to brave the dangers of the ocean.

“ My Fanny was so agitated, that she was unable to express her sorrow at this intelligence. With the most anxious solicitude, she looked stedfastly in my eyes, to see whether the fatal hour was indeed arrived that was to separate us. My silence confirmed the truth of what she had heard, and she sunk lifeless in my arms, bereft of every faculty of sense and memory.

“ With the assistance of her attendants we presently restored her to herself, when fixing her eyes upon me, her countenance all the while displaying a mixture of tenderness, affection, and melancholy, she prophetically addressed me thus :

“ I know not how it is, but something which I am incapable of explaining, whispers me, that I shall never see you more !—labouring under this belief, imagine what must be my unhappiness.

“ Comfortless,

“ Comfortless, my dear Clayton, without you, even
 “ when parting with a probability of a re-union,
 “ think what I must suffer, persuaded as I am, that
 “ the present separation will be an eternal one !

“ However, wherever you go, and whatever may
 “ be the fortunes or accidents of your future life,
 “ keep in mind the constant memory of one, who
 “ loved you with a tenderness not to be exceeded,
 “ and who, when absent, made you eternally the
 “ sovereign of her thought, and the lord and master
 “ of her affections.”

“ I kissed away the tear which swelled in her
 lovely eye during the time of her uttering these ex-
 pressions, and greatly as I needed comfort myself, I
 strove all I could to allay her apprehensions, and to
 persuade her, that her fears were groundless and void
 of probability.

“ She saw my aim, and gently shaking her head,
 as if mistrusting my sincerity, begged that I would
 not endeavour to soothe her with hopes, which she
 suspected were contrary to my own belief, and which
 only originated in my regard for her peace. She
 however thanked me for the kindness of my inteni-
 ons, and once more begged a place in my thoughts
 and my esteem.

“ As every succeeding minute grew now more and
 more critical, I for the last time embraced her, and
 with a heart almost bursting with grief, took a long,
 long farewell of her, which, agreeable to her melan-
 tholy prediction, was indeed—*an eternal one !*

C H A P. XIV.

Power without Pride. An Engagement with the Marattoes. An Imprisonment and a Release. A last Adieu to India. An Arrival in England, and a fatal Disappointment.

“UPON my arrival in India, I immediately took possession of the government with which I had been honoured.

“The adulation which was paid me by the artful and interested, made not the least impression upon me. I was never covetous of flattery, and now, less so than usual.

“Mamoud, who was my constant counsellor and companion, knew my aversion to compliment, and, in consequence of that knowledge, always addressed me with the blunt sincerity of friendship and undisguised honesty.

“His freedom so far from displeasing me, made me still more ambitious of his company, in which divested of the burthen of grandeur, I opened myself with the most unreserved confidence, and listened to his candid and disinterested advice with the familiarity of a friend and the attention of an inferior.

“I seldom undertook any thing without previously consulting him, by which means, as he well knew the disposition of the natives, I generally succeeded in every attempt, whether of a public or private nature, and acquitted myself in my negotiations in a manner which reflected equal honour on my abilities political or commercial.—

“As I wished to have Edward more immediately under my eye, I commissioned Mamoud for that purpose to go to Calcutta, where I had left him, and bring him to me.

“The

“ The trust I thus reposed in him, he executed with punctuality and fidelity, and in as short a time as my impatience could possibly allow him, he returned and delivered my son to the embraces of his fond father, who received him with an affection which nothing could surpass, and which it would be difficult even to equal.

“ I observed with pleasure, that Edward had greatly increased in beauty and manhood since I last saw him, and that the perfections of his mind kept pace with those of his person, neither of which had left me room for discontent, or put me to the necessity of blushing for him.

“ The advantages he had gained by the introduction I had given him into the mysteries of trade, were likewise such as I had every reason to rest satisfied with ; so that, abstracted from an occasional uneasiness, which every now and then intruded upon me, when I reflected on the distance which separated me from my Fanny, I had as little cause for anxiety as could well be expected from the known versatility of the human mind and the vicissitude of human affairs.

“ I lived uninterrupted in my government almost two years, when an exertion of my attention and vigilance was rendered necessary by the daring depredations committed by the Marrattoes, a kind of free-booters, who, tempted by the hopes of plunder, had proceeded from the borders of Tartary with a boldness at once wonderful and alarming.

“ To check their audacity, I collected the company's forces, together with those of the natives who were disposed to take up arms in defence of their property, and putting myself at their head, we sallied out to give them battle.

“ Undisciplined and uncontrouled, the enemy soon began to discover their error in trusting solely

to their numbers. At the very first onset they were thrown into confusion, which it was impossible with all their art to prevent or rectify.

“ Perceiving their panic, I was determined to make a vigorous push upon their main body, which we no sooner executed, than they were universally put to flight.

“ It had been well for me, had I been content with the advantage we had already gained,—but fate, which orders things without consulting our approbation, had decreed otherwise.

“ Pursuing them with an ardour which left no room for the admonitions of prudence, I soon found myself at a considerable distance from the army: this error was no sooner perceived by the flying Marattoes, than suddenly and unexpectedly forming a circle, they surrounded me, together with a few faithful followers, who finding ourselves hemmed in on all sides and incapable of resistance, were fain to yield ourselves prisoners at the discretion of the very people whom just before we were pursuing with every mark of triumph and victorious exultation.

“ This reverse of fortune, very naturally, was the occasion of much uneasiness to us. Separated from our friends, deprived of every domestic consolation, and in the power of a barbarous enemy, what had we not to fear! Their known disposition to cruelty filled us with the most fatal apprehensions, and every man of us was only intent on preparing for the stroke which was to deprive him of existence.

“ Contrary to our expectations, and contrary to the usual savageness of those barbarians, they however were content with stripping us and keeping us prisoners, which indeed was, to me, much more dreadful than death itself.

“ As they had by some accident gained the knowledge

ledge of my rank and character, they treated me with a respect and civility superior to my companions, and such as made me greatly alter the opinion I had before formed of them.

“ Mamoud, from whose friendship I looked for consolation in my misfortunes, and who had closely attached himself to my interest, shortly after died of the wounds he had received, which reduced me to the lowest ebb of despair, and rendered me incapable of listening to the voice of comfort or the power of argument.

“ The sincerity of his regard, the value of his services, and the extent of the obligation I lay under to him, all returned upon my mind so strongly, that I found it impossible to refrain from tears.—

“ Wandering about from place to place for the space of eighteen months, I continued with my conquerors in the full experience of every vicissitude which a life so uncertain and precarious could be subject to, sometimes partaking with them in the fruits of their exultation, and at other times woe-fully depressed with hunger, despair, and disappointment.

“ The last words of my Fanny arose to my remembrance as something prophetic, and which appeared now to breathe the language of truth and the spirit of divine inspiration. I began *indeed* to fear that I should never see her more;—every day confirmed me the stronger in that belief, and I only lived to evidence the improbability of my ever regaining my liberty, or seeing an end to my accumulated sufferings.

“ Fate however had decreed otherwise for me. The chiefs of those free-booters having determined to attack a large body of Europeans, which lay encamped at no great distance, began making every preparation for putting their scheme in execution.

“ The

“ The event proved to their disadvantage ; a total defeat, which was the consequence of their temerity, once more restored me to the enjoyment of freedom, and with it, to the blessings of life, which owe their existence alone to liberty and independence.

“ I shall avoid prolixity, and only observe that I was soon in a condition to return to the seat of my government, which I shortly reached, and found, that impressed with an opinion of my death, the council had appointed a gentleman to succeed me, until such time as the pleasure of the proprietary was known, which was soon expected to arrive from England.

“ Tired with state, I determined to settle my affairs and bid an eternal adieu to the East, where I had experienced so many reverses of fortune, and where I no longer wished to continue, as my property was become immense, and I had answered thereby every intention which my uncle’s avarice had suggested to him.

“ Edward, whom I found in good health, gladly embraced my proposal of accompanying me, and by his assistance and assiduity I was shortly enabled to return to my native land, where in every situation of life, my sighs and my wishes had been directed, and where I hoped to pass the remainder of my days in peace, and the full possession of every satisfaction which ease and independency could invite me to.

“ During the voyage, I frequently pleased myself with thinking how agreeably my presence would surprize my wife. The report which had prevailed of my death, I made no doubt of having reached her, and as I was not ignorant of her sensibility, I conjectured how greatly such a circumstance must affect her, and which I knew could only be equalled by the satisfaction she would partake of in the conviction of my existence.

‘ These

These reflections gave me alternately pain and pleasure, and served to diversify the chain of life, which, without such assistance, would become dull and insipid, and void of every charm necessary to add a poignancy to thought and a relish to enjoyment.

“ The instant I landed in England, after paying my respects to Lord Meanwell, whom I found alive though extremely infirm, I repaired to the habitation of my once-loved Fanny.

“ Trembling with fear and impatience I approached the door, which was opened by a servant, to whose face I was an utter stranger, of whom, however, I enquired if his mistress was within, and being answered in the affirmative, begged with a visible eagerness to be admitted to her.

“ Instead of my Fanny, I beheld an elderly lady, who having surveyed me with attention, and seeing me incapable of addressing her, demanded to know my business.

“ Alas! Madam,” said I, “ I fear there is some mistake.—I wish to see Miss Wilmot—Is that lady at home ?”

“ Miss Wilmot, Sir !” replied the lady, somewhat surprized ; “ Can you possibly be ignorant of her death ?”

“ What, my Fanny dead !” exclaimed I ; “ then Fate thou hast done thy worst !”

“ I could say no more, but instantly fainted away.

“ How long I continued in that condition I know not, but found myself, upon regaining my senses, in the care of a physician and some attendants, by whose skill I was presently enabled to ask the particulars of a circumstance the most fatal of any which could possibly befall me.

“ I was informed that she had been dead upwards of a year, and that Louisa had immediately quitted the

the neighbourhood and gone to reside in another part of the town, which gave me new cause of uneasiness, as I could gain no intelligence where to find her.

“ My sorrows were unspeakable, and such as plainly shewed how much I was affected by the news I had heard, which at once deprived me of every consolation, I had fondly flattered myself, that fortune had yet in store for me, and which convinced me, how little security was to be placed on earthly enjoyments and transitory pleasures.

“ Regardless of the attention which ought to be paid to the rules of politeness, I walked distractedly up and down the apartments which once blessed me with a sight of my charmer, and traced her image in every part, endeared to me by a remembrance of scenes which only increased my loss and added to my affliction.

“ Wherever her dear feet had trod, wherever her fingers had artlessly strayed, my eyes wandered in search of her : — I sighed at the prospect which presented itself to my imagination, and I insensibly dissolved into tears.

“ The lady of the house, who guessed at the cause of my grief, strove by every means in her power to comfort me : I thanked her for her care and the humanity of her disposition, and warmed with a grateful sense of her kindness, I was almost endless in my acknowledgement to her for the tenderness she had shewn me, which I professed, should ever entitle her to a place in my everlasting esteem ; but at the same time assured her, that it would be in vain to think of comforting me, as my misfortunes had thrown me beyond the reach of consolation, and had exposed me to the bitterest attacks of despair and disappointment.

“ Having once more acknowledged myself indebted

ed to her kindness, I took my leave, and returned to my own apartments overwhelmed with sorrow, and incapable of hope.

C H A P. XV.

Last Advice of a near Relation. An accidental Meeting. An interesting Conversation, and a Journey into Wales where Mr. Clayton concludes the History of his Life and Adventures.

“ **T**HE instant I arrived at home, my grief involuntarily manifested a return no less violent than extraordinary; — extraordinary, because it was an event which I ought to have been armed against, as natural in itself, and such as reason taught me to live in expectation of.

“ Every fond anticipation, every flattering idea of reversionary happiness, now vanished like a dream. That prophetic impulse, which actuated my Fanny at our last meeting, returned upon my imagination as the spirit of divinity, and shewed me that her foreknowledge of what was to happen, was not founded on idle speculation, but deduced its origin from inspiration and the favour of the Deity.

“ After having paid the tribute which affection owed to conjugal fidelity, I used every effort I could devise to gain some intelligence of Louisa. With all my care, however, I was unable to learn what was become of her, nor could I procure the least information, which might lead me to a discovery of the place of her retirement. My Edward, too assisted me in this task, and altho’ his assiduity met not with the reward it merited, it however, more than ever, rivetted him to my esteem, as it confirmed me in the opinion I had formed of his readiness to contribute by every means in his power to the promotion of my satisfaction, and the furtherance of my desire.

“ Lord

“ Lord Meanwell, whose health was visibly upon the decline, in the mean time grew daily worse. Bent down beneath a load of infirmities, his physicians recommended him to settle his temporal affairs as expeditiously as he could, as it was impossible that he should receive any benefit from the powers of medicine, which had already been exhausted in his service without effect, and which would only serve to prolong a miserable existence, without the hopes of establishing a cure, or even of administering the most inconsiderable portion of ease.

“ Finding himself drawn near his end, he sent for me to his bedside, and addressed me in the following manner :

“ Worn out with care, and tired of life, I have desired your attendance for the purpose of bidding you an everlasting adieu: anxious to render you every service which I was capable of, I have been ever eager for the advancement of your fortunes, and have seldom enjoyed a satisfaction in which you was not a sharer. By an attention to the rules of oeconomy and frugality, I have considerably augmented my estate, which at present is more than sufficient to glut the avarice of the most mercenary, and which indeed is such as few subjects ought to possess.

“ I trust, that the care which directed me in the management of it, will actuate you. I have hitherto found, that you pay an implicit obedience to my commands (*one* particular excepted, which at present I wish not to remind you of, it was an error of the judgment, which time already has, or shortly will rectify.)—I wish you still to attend to my counsel ; it is begot by Experience, and matured by Truth and Observation.

“ You will speedily be in possession of an immense revenue, adorned with a title, and surrounded with
“ sycophants

“ sycophants and flatterers : let not their adulation
 “ allure you from the paths of justice. Pride and
 “ vanity are qualities which diminish and hide every
 “ virtue intended to ornament the human heart,
 “ and which blemish and deform those actions which
 “ might otherwise appear as meritorious.

“ My domestics in general I particularly recom-
 “ mend to you ; they have served me long and
 “ faithfully. Be to them a tender master, and
 “ consider them as inferiors to you in nothing, but
 “ the accidental allotments of fortune, a goddess
 “ who is much oftner led by partiality than merit,
 “ and whose favours are not to be purchased by
 “ worth, but are generally showered on the unde-
 “ serving.

“ Remember above all things to inter me with
 “ as little pomp as possible. Honours paid to the
 “ dead are a burlesque upon the living, and only
 “ serve to make us pity the unfortunate wretch up-
 “ on whom such unnecessary sums have been lavish-
 “ ed. Decency ought at all times and upon all oc-
 “ casions to be observed, and upon no one more so
 “ than in funeral solemnities : whatever exceeds
 “ *that*, is improper and ought to be avoided.

“ I assured him of strictly and uniformly abid-
 ing by the directions he had laid down for my ob-
 servance in every particular, and after thanking him
 for the care he had ever shewn to promote my in-
 terest and happiness, I quitted him, and in a few
 hours learnt, to my unspeakable sorrow, that he had
 breathed his last.

“ I had now lost every friend, every relation
 (my Edward alone excepted) which this world pre-
 sented me worth my regard. My father, my mo-
 ther, my Fanny, my uncle, my Louisa, all lost ! and
 myself left alone to wade through this sea of sor-
 rows, comfortless and unassisted.

“ Lord

“ Lord Meanwell notwithstanding his love of money, had a thousand good qualities, which amply served to make amends for this single imperfection, and which endeared him to all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance. As for myself, I was so greatly indebted to his kindness, that it was impossible I should sufficiently express what I felt at the recollection of his departure: it was a silent, artless grief, yet such as infinitely exceeded the powers of description, and put affection to the blush.

“ The poor who had found in him a valuable benefactor, and who had liberally tasted of his benevolence, unanimously bewailed the death of one who had so charitably fed and clothed them, and poured forth unceasing prayers and lamentations in testimony of their gratitude, and in remembrance of the irreparable loss they had sustained by an event which deprived them of a friend and protector.

“ I was now possessed of wealth almost unbounded, and which only grieved me in the recollection of the difficulties I had to undergo, in making a proper distribution of it in a manner which might tend to the happiness of my distressed fellow creatures, for whose benefit alone I considered myself as sent into the world,

“ The title which reverted to me with the estate, I estimated as of no value in itself, and such as only served to reflect dishonour on the wearer, unless accompanied by actions, which of themselves ennobled the possessor. In this persuasion, I for the present relinquished every advantage arising therefrom, and contented myself with simply retaining my usual name, in which character I was resolved once more to resume my enquiries after my lost Louisa.

“ I was, however, no more fortunate this time than the last; in spite of all my endeavours, I could learn

learn nothing satisfactory, and I began to despair of ever seeing her, when chance luckily directed me to this place, where I have at last found the treasure of which I was in search, and with it that peace, which I was apprehensive would never more return to the harbour of my breast, which it so long had quitted without a probability of finding its home.

“ Crossing one of the public streets of the metropolis, I one morning, quite accidentally, met my old friend Mr. Jarvis. Notwithstanding the intervention of considerably more than twenty years I immediately knew him, and without ceremony accosted him.

“ It was not without difficulty I convinced him of my identity, which however I had no sooner persuaded him of, than he proposed adjourning to a neighbouring tavern for the conveniency of a few minutes conversation.

“ I readily consented to his proposal, and after the usual salutation, he informed me of divers domestic matters, such as the marriage of Miss Jarvis, and other particulars, which I paid but little attention to, as I had somewhat of more consequence to unravel to him, and which I waited only for an opportunity to put in execution.

“ He at last gave me to understand, that Miss Lloyd, the young lady whom I had seen at Jarvis-house, had, soon after my quitting Gloucestershire, unaccountably eloped from his guardianship, and that in spite of every endeavour, he had never since been able to learn what was become of her.

“ Ignorant as I am,” said the old gentleman,
 “ to account for the motive, which might induce
 “ her to a proceeding so extraordinary, I am how-
 “ ever unwilling to impute it to a vicious passion, or
 “ a depraved inclination. I am confident that Fanny
 “ never could be prevailed upon to swerve from the
 paths

“ paths of virtue, or the obligations of morality, and
 “ am therefore occasionally inclined to attribute her
 “ absence to some fatal accident, dreadful in its con-
 “ sequences. Should she indeed have fallen a prey
 “ to the seductive wiles of some artful villain,— a
 “ thought I cannot indulge without horror, I can
 “ only say in the words of the poet,

Then Heaven has lost its image here on earth !”—

“ During this address, I perceived that he eyed me with an attention which bespoke a solicitude somewhat more than common, and appeared as if endeavouring to penetrate into something which he wished to be satisfied of.

“ I was greatly embarrassed in what manner to act ; — I wished to inform him of a circumstance which, it was evident, he already had a suspicion of, and which I was unhappy at having so long secluded from his knowledge, yet dreaded to satisfy him, from an ignorance how he might be inclined to construe my behaviour in that affair. I was desirous of retaining his good opinion, and was fearful of risking it by a confession so dangerous.

“ Notwithstanding these reflections, I was however determined to avail myself of an opportunity which promised to recompence me for part of the anxiety I had suffered in the remembrance of the injury I had offered her family, by an ingenuous and open avowal of a transaction which, I had every reason to imagine, had given them no small uneasiness, and which would in some measure satisfy them of the rectitude of my actions and the sincerity of my passion.

“ You need no longer, Sir,” said I, be at a loss
 “ to account for the elopement of the lady, for
 “ whose fate you appear so anxious : in me behold
 “ the person who persuaded her to a step which has
 “ filled you with such various apprehensions. From
 the

“ the first moment I beheld the charming Fanny I
 “ loved her. Divested of every gross and low idea,
 “ my passion was of that pure and heavenly kind,
 “ which surpasses art, and can only be found in the
 “ bosom of affection. Acting in conformity to the
 “ dictates of that passion, I made her my wife, by
 “ every tie which honour and religion have wisely
 “ designed for the observance of their children. As
 “ my wife, I continued to love her, till death envi-
 “ ous of my happiness, snatched her from me to be
 “ a partaker of the joys infinitely more valuable, and
 “ which are only intended for those whose lives are
 “ regulated by the principles of virtue and morality.”

“ I next presented the old gentleman with the
 heads of my history, from the time of my Fanny’s
 quitting him, to the period of her dissolution, which
 he heard with great attention, and not without
 convincing many evident tokens of admiration at the
 progress of a passion which appeared to have been
 founded on Truth, Reason, and Affection.

“ He acknowledged, that from the moment of
 her being missing, suspicion had strongly fallen upon
 me, which was afterwards in part confirmed by the
 testimony of the people at the farm house, which
 had been the scene of our interviews. From the in-
 telligence he gathered from them, he concluded,
 that it could be no other than myself that had ac-
 companied her in her flight, and this persuasion had
 dwelt so firmly on his mind, that he had imparted his
 opinion to the brother of my Fanny, who was then
 in his fourteenth year, and who, as he dearly loved
 his sister, was the more alarmed at her so sudden
 elopement.

“ He further said, that he forbore writing to Lord
 Meanwell on that subject, as knowing that we would
 contrive to hide it from his Lordship, and that, as
 he could not hope to gather any information from a

correspondence of that sort, and being likewise partial in my favour, he rather trusted to my honour and love for his ward, as her security, than wish to intimidate me by an exertion of his authority as her guardian.

“ He likewise informed me, that the small fortune her father had given her, was by his management increased to a considerable sum, which he was ready to pay me whenever I thought proper to demand it.

“ I totally disclaimed every pretension to her fortune, and begged it might be restored to her brother, whom I considered as being more justly entitled to it than myself. I already was burthened with riches, more than I desired, and I wished not to increase them.

“ By his persuasion, however, I was determined to pay a visit to that brother, for the purpose of correcting any unhappy prejudice he might have conceived against her whose honour was unquestionable, and whose prudence (one single instance, her partiality to me excepted) was almost unexampled.

“ It was not without pleasure I encouraged the reflection of being the instrument to rectify a mistake, which could not fail of being productive of much dissatisfaction and uneasiness. I already enjoyed in idea, the transport arising from a task so commendable, and flattered myself with receiving the thanks of one who, tenacious of a sister's honour, would gladly embrace an opportunity so flattering to his wishes, and which would serve to convince him of the error he had imbibed detrimental to the purity of her, whose virtue could not be held in too great an estimation.

“ Mr. Jarvis was not able to inform me where the brother of my Fanny immediately resided. The only intelligence I learnt from him was, that Mr. Lloyd might probably be heard of somewhere on the borders of Glamorganshire, where he had an estate,

estate, and where there was the greatest likelihood of my meeting with him.

"I soon after took my leave of the old gentleman, after having promised to pay him a visit at Jarvis house as soon as fortune had blessed me with the sight of him, of whom I was resolved instantly to go in search.

"For this purpose, I made all the expedition I possibly could, and taking Edward with me, we set out for South Wales, a great part of which we travelled over without meeting with the success we wished for, until chance accidentally directed us hither, where we are detained for the purpose of giving evidence against a couple of men, whose villainy has proved fortunate to me, inasmuch as it has been the happy means of restoring me to the embraces of a brother and a daughter, both of whom I was fearful I had for ever lost.

"Thus, Sir," (continued Mr. Clayton, addressing himself to Mr. Lloyd) have I presented you with the history of a life, which I shall henceforth consider as truly fortunate. In every vicissitude, and in every scene thereof, I plainly trace the hand of Providence, which protected me from the numberless snares and accidents to which I was perpetually exposed, and which I never should have survived, had I not been upheld by a power superior to earthly aids, and directed by him, in whom I have ever placed my trust and confidence. To him be the honour, and the praise due to his inexhaustible goodness, who this day has suffered me to be partaker of the blessings he has long been preparing for me, and who has snatched me from the hand of despair to the enjoyment of life, peace, and happiness."

C H A P XVI.

In which this History goes back. Mercy shewn to the Undeserving. A Visit to Mr. Jarvis. A delicate Struggle. And a short Dissertation on the Sexes, wherein is maintained the Superiority of the Female World.

THE length of Mr. Clayton's narrative (for so we shall still call him) having greatly exhausted the day, Mr. Lloyd reminded them that it was time to seek some refreshment.

Dinner being soon after served up, they needed not much invitation to induce them to make a hearty meal, which was no sooner over, than Mrs. Gilbert interceded with her father for the manager and his friend Rattle, whom, in spite of their manifest criminality, she could not forget, as they had long been her companions and fellow sufferers.

Mr. Clayton, who was unwilling to deny her what she seemed so anxious to effect, readily yielded to her entreaties, and promised, that he would not appear against them.

“ Let the punishment,” said he, “ they have
 “ already suffered in a temporary deprivation of their
 “ liberty, teach them the obligation they owe to
 “ the laws by which they are governed and protected.
 “ The lenity they at present experience, ought not
 “ however to make them expect it in future.—
 “ Though Justice sleeps for a while, she will in the
 “ end overtake them, should they persevere in a de-
 “ fiance to order, and violently endeavour to deprive
 “ their neighbour of the fruits of his honest industry,
 “ which he has perhaps been toiling for with un-
 “ remitted anxiety, and which in a moment he sees
 “ himself stripped of by the villainy of one who is a
 “ disgrace

“ disgrace to his species.—However, for once be their
 “ wickedness their chastisement : my Louisa entreats
 “ for them, and they are safe !”

Mrs. Gilbert thanked him for the readiness which he shewed to oblige her, and assured him of the regard she should even pay to his commands, equally induced thereto by duty and inclination.

* It will be necessary to inform the reader, that our Heroine was still in the same uncourtly dress in which she first attracted the eyes of Mr. Lloyd. Her tender father, in the transport with which he beheld her, entirely disregarded this circumstance, which, immaterial as it appeared to him, was however such as required a reformation.

By the assistance of Mrs. Gwynn, this was however soon rectified, and the next morning her whole appearance received so considerable an alteration for the better, that she no longer seemed as the same person.

Mrs. Gilbert was beautifully modelled, finely proportioned, and possessed that gracefulness of action and ease of deportment, which at once captivates and commands. The various scenes of life she had been witness to trying as they undoubtedly were, had not however deprived her of the roses which nature had spread on her cheeks, and which animated her features with a transport which affected all around her. She was yet in the bloom of youth, and notwithstanding the misfortunes to which she had been exposed, she was yet cheerful and retained her spirits superior to every accident.

The instant Mr. Clayton saw her, after the alteration in her dress, he was, if possible, a thousand times more wound up into admiration of her than ever. The lineaments, the image, the deportment of his Fanny, all returned upon his mind, and shewed him so exact a copy of her whom he once delighted in, that he was unable to express the smallest part of what he felt, but after vainly attempting to describe his satisfaction, he sat down incapable of articulation and only eloquent in his looks.

After having stayed several days with Mr. Lloyd, and having fully answered the intention of his visit, Mr. Clayton began to think of returning. As he was so

near Gloucestershire, he could not however resolve to quit that part of the kingdom without first fulfilling his promise to Mr. Jarvis.

Mr. Lloyd consenting to accompany him, they all set out together for the seat of that gentleman, which they reached the following day, and where they met with a cordial reception, flowing from the united source of friendship and esteem.

The old gentleman was happy at the success which Mr. Clayton had met with in his endeavours to undeceive Mr. Lloyd in respect to the opinion he had formed of his sister, and embraced Edward and Mrs. Gilbert in a manner which evinced the regard he entertained for the memory of their mother and the kind welcome with which he received themselves.

Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Clayton, and Mr. Jarvis, being left by themselves, the latter once more reminded Mr. Clayton of the money which lay in his hands, once the property of Fanny.

"I have already," said that gentleman, declared to you, that I renounce all pretensions to it; it rather belongs to her brother, and I would wish him to take it. For my own part, I am determined upon no account to possess myself of it. I have already a superfluity, and more than I can possibly find employment for."

"You will excuse me," replied Mr. Lloyd, "it is undoubtedly now the property of Mr. Clayton, nor can I indulge a thought of receiving as my own, what by every claim belongs to another. I have sufficient to gratify every moderate desire, and I wish not for the means which may induce me to exceed that moderation, which has ever been my study, and I trust ever will."

As this was a struggle of delicacy, Mr. Jarvis was ignorant in what manner to act. He was cautious of offending either party, and yet he wish to have it settled, as by his care and management it was in its present state a sum far from inconsiderable, and such as was sufficient of itself, independent of other means, to secure an easy competency to him who might possess it.

For the present, however, they desired Mr. Jarvis to keep it until they had resolved in what manner to dis-

pose

pose of it, each being obstinately bent on refusing to appropriate any part of it to his own use.

The place they were in, recalled Mr. Clayton's attention to former scenes in which he had been an actor. He retraced in memory his first interview with Fanny, the lasting impression that interview had made upon him, and the declarations of love he had presented her with in the pavillion.

Reflections like these operated so strongly upon him, that he frequently forgot himself, and bursting forth into an instantaneous exclamation, he called the attention of the bystanders, who, ignorant of his thoughts, considered his rapture as the wild and ungoverned excesses of madness and enthusiasm.

Mrs. Gilbert in the mean time was employed in cultivating the good opinion of her brother. The similarity which subsisted in their sentiments, would of itself (exclusive of consanguinity) have created a friendship for each other. Assisted by the ties of relationship, it was something more than friendship, it was affection and love.

In this happy retirement they continued upwards of a month; Mr. Clayton thought he should never have remained too long in a place which bore witness to his earliest passion, and Mr. Jarvis was pleased to find he could any ways contribute to the satisfaction of his guests, and for which purpose no trouble nor expence was spared.

The beautiful prospects which this neighbourhood afforded added greatly to the situation, and were such as could not be viewed without admiration almost approaching to idolatry. It was therefore no wonder, that they all continued to partake of the pleasures which so plentifully invited them, without a thought which might induce them to wish for a change, or to sigh for home.

"I have been thinking," said Mr. Lloyd one day to Mr. Clayton, "how wonderfully, I may say miraculously, Providence has worked in my favour, by sending me to the inn to enquire after you, without which I might probably have continued for ever in an error, which constituted my greatest unhappiness, and frequently filled me with reflections very

“ opposite to that peace which is found in the breast of contentment and philosophy.

“ It is true, time had in some measure corrected the violence of my grief, and as I had long concluded, that my sister was an outcast from virtue, I considered her as unworthy of my thought, and in consequence of so erroneous a conclusion endeavoured to shake her from my affection, as a stranger to my blood, and an alien to my house.

“ Hence it came to pass, that I made no enquiry respecting her, as I already harboured an opinion of her conduct equally unfavourable to her morals and her reputation: I wished not therefore to seek any further confirmation of what I accounted as past a doubt, but mourning the downfall of her honour, I formed a resolution of for ever contemning her whole sex, as formed without virtue and calculated only for our destruction.

“ The correction you have given my sentiments has, however, been the happy means of curing a prejudice, which I am at present sorry that I ever imbibed, and wish not again to contract”

Mr. Clayton congratulated him on having divested himself of so disagreeable a companion, and shewed him the absolute necessity mankind was under of associating with the sex.

“ Naturally rough, and unpolished in ourselves,” said he, “ we require every assistance which may tend to smoothe our rugged natures, and restore us to the form of somewhat human: for this purpose to what can we fly except to woman, who by her endearing smiles and engaging manners quells the turbulence of our passions, and reduces us to the standard of Reason and to the rule of Right?”

“ When the cares of the world too violently assail us, and scarcely allow us to hearken to the voice of religion—when we find ourselves hurried on by impetuous sallies beyond the limits ascribed to us by discretion—a woman, like heaven itself, leads us to a contemplation of our error, dissolves every difficulty which started up in opposition to our peace, and hurls our cares to rest with a zeal at once courteous and commendable.

“ Left

“ Left to themselves, mankind would be perpetually involved in commotion and lawless anarchy : incapable of regulating the excesses to which the weakness and caprice of human nature subject them, they would be instruments of cruelty, uncivilized and barbarous, governed by their passions, and unable to restrain their desires, however contrary to Reason, or however opposed by Religion or the obligations of Morality.

“ Women, on the contrary, formed of the milder elements and less subject to these violent starts which unman the man, and render him a proper object for the finger of contempt, might of themselves compose a society such as would put the boasted wisdom of the mighty *Lords of the Creation* to the blush, and which, if they did not envy, ought at least to furnish them with virtue sufficient to induce them to emulate.”

In this manner did Mr. Clayton deliver his sentiments relative to the merits of the sexes ; nor was Mr. Lloyd in the least inclined to oppose them, founded as they were on truth and in many instances exactly conformable with the observations he himself had made, since he had fortunately bade adieu to the prejudice he had so long unhappily imbibed.

As it was now almost time for this last mentioned gentleman to think of returning into Glamorganshire, and for the rest of the company to proceed towards town, contrary to the desire of Mr. Jarvis, preparations were making for that purpose, when an accident happened which detained them some little while longer, and was productive of an event no less fortunate than extraordinary.

C H A P. XVII.

A miraculous Preservation, productive of an Adventure totally unexpected. A happy Explanation, and a matrimonial Reconciliation,

IT had been long customary with Mr. Clayton to take a morning's ride, an exercise equally innocent and agreeable, and which his present situation more than ever invited him to the indulgence of.

128 THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

Pensive and melancholy, he suffered his horse to stray wherever he chose, free from controul, and under no regulation to guide him in his wanderings, exclusive of instinct and inclination.

Ruminating on his departed Fanny, and insensible to every other idea, one morning as he pursued his usual ride near the bank of the Severn, his horse suddenly took fright, and in spite of all he could do plunged into the river with a fury impossible to be appealed.

Perceiving the danger he was in, he possessed presence of mind sufficient to throw himself off, trusting Providence for further aid to extricate him from a situation which threatened the most fatal consequences.

Struggling against the waters and nearly exhausted, he began to despair of help, when he was fortunately perceived by a gentleman who was walking that way, and who no sooner saw the difficulty under which he laboured, than flying to his assistance, in a moment he brought him almost lifeless on shore, free from death and safe from the dangers which but the moment before surrounded him.

By the skill of a surgeon in the neighbourhood, Mr. Clayton was presently recovered, and enabled to walk back to Jarvis House, which he was partly compelled to do, as his horse was drowned, and other conveniencies not very easily procured in that part of the kingdom.

The instant he was capable of speech, he endeavoured to express his gratitude to the gentleman to whose humanity he was indebted for his life. His every attempt, however, was insufficient to convey the most inconsiderable part of what he experienced, and he remained suffering under the weight of his feelings almost lifeless and truly inactive.

“ In what manner, Sir,” said he, when the violence of these feelings was somewhat abated, “ in what manner, Sir, may I be permitted to shew my gratitude for the service you have rendered me, in restoring me to life, and in restoring me to happiness? Or how may I express the sense I entertain of your humanity and uncommon kindness, in thus assisting a stranger, ignorant as you cannot but choose to be, whether or not he is deserving of so extraordinary a proof of your goodness?”

“ I wish

"I wish not to deduce a merit, Sir," replied the stranger, "from what is the duty of every man. I am pleased at the idea of having rendered you a service, *that* pleasure is of itself a sufficient reward, and I seek not for praise, which is food alone for the vain and the arrogant; to them give it: for my own part, I have fulfilled no more than was my duty, and from which no man ought to claim the least merit.

"If I mistake not, Sir," continued he, "I heard you say, that I have been the means of restoring you to happiness. Alas! I myself once thought I was in possession of it; but I have long seen my error, and live only to lament the credulity of my nature in foolishly placing a reliance on so fallible a presumption."

By a certain air of melancholy, very visibly impressed on his countenance, Mr. Clayton immediately perceived, that he laboured under some uneasiness which affected his spirits, and which he hoped to find himself enabled to cure.

As they both required a change of cloaths, he for that purpose invited the stranger to accompany him to Jarvis House, which was but a short mile from thence; where they would meet with the conveniencies their uncomfortable situation demanded, and where they might be assured of receiving every welcome which friendship and hospitality could bestow.

The gentleman readily agreed to Mr. Clayton's invitation, and they presently arrived at the mansion which was to furnish them with the means of which they were in want, and which was to be productive of an adventure no less surprizing than unexpected.

The condition in which they entered immediately attracted the attention of the domestics, who as instantly informed their superiors of a circumstance for which they were unable to account.

The whole family was directly in commotion and busied in providing them the necessaries which their situation required; amongst the rest, Mrs. Gilbert was not the last in manifesting her duty. Eager to shew her love for her parent, she flew towards him with an anxiety which gave fresh wings to her inclination, and bespoke an affection more than filial.

The moment she fixed her eyes on the stranger, she stood as one petrified with amazement. unable to execute the intention of her appearance, a deadly paleness took immediate possession of her cheek and she fainted away.

The gentleman who had evidently been the cause of this accident; and who was no other than Mr. Gilbert, appeared nearly as much affected as herself: it was with the greatest difficulty he could be restrained from accompanying her in the temporary suspension of the faculties of memory which she suffered, and was only kept therefrom by the timely application of salts.

Mr. Clayton who was ignorant of the cause of all this, very naturally attributed his daughter's indisposition to her apprehensions on his account; he had not the least suspicion of the real character of his preserver, of whom he had conceived an opinion very different from that in which he had been taught to consider his son-in-law: nor would it have been an easy matter to have persuaded him that the two were one and the same person, had not his own confession confirmed *that* which nothing else could have led him into a belief of.

It was a considerable time before Mrs. Gilbert recovered so as to recollect what had happened, which however she had no sooner done, than she was in danger of relapsing into her former condition.

The memory of her sufferings having however fortified her against a weakness she could in no wise prevent, she once more resumed that placid stile of behaviour which in common distinguished her, and considering him as the original author of all her misfortunes, she addressed him with a firmness which it would be as difficult to equal as impossible to excel:

"Although I am yet at a loss, Sir," said she, "whether I ought to attribute this interview to accident or design, I must nevertheless confess my surprize at a circumstance so unexpected and indeed unwished for.

"Think not however to deduce any advantage therefrom; unshaken in my determinations, I am still firmly relolved to abide by my prior intention

“ of for ever separating from one has shewn himself
 “ capable of the commission of the most atrocious
 “ villainies, and who has proved himself by his con-
 “ duct to be at once unmanly and ungenerous.”

During this short address, delivered with a deliberate calmness, such as bespoke a mind fully determined in what manner to act, Mr. Gilbert betrayed every sign of amazement. Regarding her with a look which plainly evinced what he felt, he replied in the following terms :

“ If, Madam, to have studied with unwearied at-
 “ tention, that which seemed best calculated to pro-
 “ mote your satisfaction ;—if to have made your
 “ will and your desires the rule of my actions ;—if to
 “ have preferred your happiness in every instance,
 “ with a zeal which left no room for reasonable com-
 “ plaint ;—if these, Madam, may be termed villainy
 “ and ungenerosity, I am indeed truly guilty.

“ Actuated by no sinister view ; excited by no hope
 “ of an interested nature ; unacquainted with ambi-
 “ tion, and only eager after domestic happiness, I was
 “ anxious to make you mine for the best of all rea-
 “ sons ; because I loved you.

“ Studious to oblige you, I was never happier than
 “ when contributing to your pleasure, and transport-
 “ ed with the idea having created a mutual affection,
 “ I considered myself as the most fortunate of human
 “ beings—But alas ! in a single moment all my fancied
 “ happiness vanished, and made room only for de-
 “ jection and the horrors of despair !

“ You accuse me of villainy : what proof have you
 “ to support so improbable a charge ? Name but an
 “ instance, wherein I have swerved in my duty to
 “ you, or my neighbour, and I will acknowledge the
 “ justice of the character with which I have been stig-
 “ matized.”—

“ Have you then forgot your treatment of the un-
 “ fortunate Charlotte,” said she.

“ Charlotte ! Charlotte !” exclaimed he, astonished
 at the question ; “ What Charlotte ?—Or who is it
 “ you mean ? For heaven’s sake, Madam, be more
 “ explicit !”

“ Charlotte Jones, Sir,” replied she, the daughter of

“ your tutor. Think not, Mr. Gilbert, that I am a
 “ stranger to the baseness of your conduct respecting
 “ that unhappy girl! It was to avoid a similar destiny;
 “ to avoid being sacrificed to the embraces of Lord
 “ Monson, or some wretch equally detestable;—*this*
 “ it was that induced me to fly an habitation, in which
 “ I could not depend upon that security which I had
 “ a right to demand as your wife.”

“ The daughter of my tutor!—a sacrifice to Lord
 “ Monson!” said Mr. Gilbert hastily, “ explain this
 “ riddle, I beseech you, Madam: I am ignorant of
 “ your meaning, and fear you have been imposed up-
 “ on by the artifices of an enemy, who has deceived
 “ you by misrepresentations equally gross and impro-
 “ bable.”

Mr. Clayton, who by this time had gathered some information of the meaning of this singular scene, and who was through gratitude induced to think favourably of his preserver, with whose character he was so unexpectedly acquainted, very humanely interposed his authority, as the means of promoting an explanation necessary for the peace and happiness of both parties.

“ Louisa,” said he, “ I doubt you have been deceived:—this gentleman cannot be the villain you have described him—It is impossible. —The more I consider this matter, the more clearly am I persuaded of his innocence.—I would even stake my life upon his honour and the reality of his affection.”

“ Alas! Sir,” replied she, “ would to heaven that I could indulge myself with a presumption so flattering to my wishes, I should be glad to be convinced of a mistake so fatal to my repose, but I fear argument will have no force sufficient to combat the incontestible proofs I have received of his baseness and criminal cowardice.”

Mr. Jarvis who was absent on their first entrance, now very luckily made his appearance,

The moment he entered, he fixed his eyes on Mr. Gilbert, whom he immediately recognized as an old acquaintance. The last mentioned gentleman was, however, too greatly affected with the unaccountable conduct of his wife, to attend much to the enquiries which
 Mr.

Mr. Jarvis made after his welfare, but almost petrified with sorrow, he remained suffering under the weight of feelings, the intensity of which was more than adequate to the strength of a mortal, and such as nearly bent him down prostrate at the foot of despair.

By the desire of her father, Mrs. Gilbert now entered upon a repetition of the story related to her by the unfortunate young creature, who had been the sole cause which induced her to consider herself as exempt from the observation of all matrimonial obligations, and which she repeated not without reluctance, nor without manifesting very visible tokens of grief and uneasiness.

In the course of this recapitulation Mr. Gilbert was very differently affected. In the former part he displayed every mark of curiosity and amazement; but towards the conclusion his countenance brightened up, and he no longer appeared as aiming at the solution of a riddle difficult to comprehend or mysterious to define.

“ Ah, Madam !” said he, the instant she had finished her story, “ how happy should I consider myself, “ could I be certified of regaining your affections with “ as much ease, as I can convince you of my innocence !

“ To Mr. Jarvis, who has known me from my “ childhood, I appeal in support of my veracity, when “ I assert, that I received my education at Westminster-school ; that my father was a plain untitled “ country gentleman, and that I am not the person “ alluded to in the story you have just now repeated.

“ Sir Gilbert Gilbert is a gentleman I am well acquainted with, and to whom I have the honour of “ being nearly related : his son I likewise know, but “ am a stranger to his vices, greatly as they have been “ the means of injuring me in the esteem of her whom “ it was my wish to please.

“ That I never made you acquainted with the story “ of my life, was merely owing to its unimportance, “ and to your never expressing a curiosity of that kind. “ I indeed now wish I had presented you with the heads “ of a history, which, however simple and void of grace, “ would have been the happy instrument to have armed “ you against a mistake unfortunate in its consequences, though, I hope, happy in its termination.”

After

After an address so evidently sincere, Mrs. Gilbert could no longer remain insensible of her mistake. she saw her credulity, and lamented it as something highly criminal in herself, insomuch as it had given pain to the breast of him whose innocence could no longer admit of a doubt. The remembrance of his former tenderness, and the repeated acts of kindness he had shewn her, all returned upon her memory in the brightest colours; employ her imagination how she would, she found nothing but what contributed to convince her of the sincerity of his affection and the disinterestedness of his love.

Her thoughts could not long be employed in this manner without calling forth her tears, which her fond husband viewed with pleasure, as a proof of her repentance and the return of her love.

"And am I indeed so happy as to be convinced of my error?" said she, "alas! what pain, what affliction must my conduct have conveyed to your heart! how criminal soever I may appear in your eyes I have nevertheless strictly and invariably confined myself in every particular within the limits of virtue and the laws of honour. It was the respect I entertained for those laws which induced me to a wandering life; trusting to the never-ceasing care of Providence, I have at length found an end to my misfortunes, by being restored to the embraces of a parent and to the affection of a husband. How this last circumstance was brought about, I shall be happy to learn."——

"From me then learn it!" exclaimed Mr. Clayton; "from me, who owe my life and safety to your husband, and who am infinitely pleased to contemplate a son-in-law in my preserver, especially one, the goodness of whose heart I am sufficiently acquainted with, and whose sentiments do honour to humanity."

He then presented her with the particulars of the accident which had brought him acquainted with Mr. Gilbert, together with the obligation he lay under to that gentleman, all which she heard with attention, and not without expressing her admiration at so remarkable an instance of the interposition of the Deity,
whose

whose providence, ever wakeful for the preservation of his creatures, produced an event which restored peace and happiness to those hearts which had long been strangers to sensations so exquisite.

C H A P. XVIII.

The History of Mr. Gilbert, A Search after Domestic Happiness. The Delicacy of conjugal Feelings. A Visit to an acquaintance. A new Adventure. The Jealousy of Friendship, and a Sigh for Retirement.

GRATEFULLY sensible of the blessings she was restored to the enjoyment of, Mrs. Gilbert now began to turn her attention to her father and husband, who all this time remained in the uncomfortable situation in which they first entered, to the manifest hazard of their health and the injury of their constitution.

By her assistance they were presently provided with every change which their condition demanded, and finding it impossible to persuade them to go to bed, she entertained them with a repetition of her adventures, with which Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Jarvis were till then totally unacquainted.

The apology she made for her conduct, was such as naturally arose from a mind sensible of its errors, and such as from its ingenuity tended more to insure her the esteem of the hearers than the most elaborate and studied production of human art, though aided by the graces of elocution and the music of oratorical excellency.

After dinner Mr. Jarvis addressing himself to Mr. Gilbert, asked him by what means he became so fond of retirement, so contrary to the generality of those of his age, seeing he had altogether past the earliest part of his life amidst the bustle and confusion of the metropolis?

To this question Mr. Gilbert answered with a sigh, — "Ask that lady, Sir, she can tell you, as the only was the cause of my seeking that happiness in retirement which was denied me in the world.

Brought up under the tender eye of an indulgent parent, I insensibly contracted a fondness for domestic life,

life, in the pursuit of which I considered no study as too intense.

Happy in the idea of having found an opportunity of extending this aim, I paid my addresses to my Louisa, from the consideration that she alone was calculated to increase the satisfaction I flattered myself with receiving in a plan so unfashionable, and which I the more readily believed from observations I had made of her temper and disposition, which I thought bore a great conformity to my own.

"In the midst however of my happiness, in the midst of my fancied felicity, all my transports arrived at a sudden issue, and I found myself forsaken, unaccountably forsaken by her in whom my every desire was centered, and on whom my affections were so immoveably fixed, that they seemed to bid defiance to the accidents of time, and the misfortunes incident to human weakness.

"Upon my arrival at home one evening, after a little excursion I had indulged myself with, I was informed, that my wife was absent on a visit to a lady in the neighbourhood.

"I was nothing surprised hereat, as the intimacy which subsisted between our families rendered a circumstance of that kind exceedingly natural, and I only thought it singular, as contrary to her usual custom, she went out unattended.

"As the evening was considerably advanced, notwithstanding my fatigue, I eagerly repaired to the house where I was given to understand I might find her, and to my inexpressible amazement was told, that she had not been there.

"Good Heavens! what did I not suffer at this intelligence! — I was apprehensive that some accident had happened to her, and in consequence of a fear so reasonable, hastened back to my own habitation in hopes of receiving some information which might allay the disquietude her absence had occasioned.

"The addition I gathered to the particulars I had already received, was however such as afforded but little satisfaction, and which rather served to increase than diminish the suspicion which began to invade my repose,

repose, and which furnished me with ideas at once melancholy and pitiable.

“ With the most painful anxiety and perplexity, I waited in expectation of the moment which might restore her to my embraces, and, with the fond impatience of a truly affectionate friend, was ardent in my wishes for her safe return.

“ Hour after hour, I thus passed in a state of the most cruel suspense, incapable of forming any conjecture which might lead me to a certainty of her fate, and utterly unable to suppress the disagreeable emotions her departure had given birth to.

“ Every one of my domestics I dispatched in search of her, but without effect; and unsuccessful in all my endeavours, I traversed mournfully those apartments, which presented her idea to my imagination, and, sighing involuntarily, resigned myself to the blackest horror.

“ By the greatest accident in the world, as I was looking for some papers on the succeeding morning, I met with a letter from her, which in a moment informed me of her determination, yet left me as much as ever at a loss to what motive I ought to impute the step she had taken. Every sentence of this epistle bore so mysterious an air, that I was almost distracted with attempting to define her meaning, nor could I, upon the most deliberate retrospection, call to mind one instance, which made me deserving of the charge she had there alleged against me.

“ Change and vary the object of my memory how it might, I could not with all my care find that I had been once deficient in my love and tenderness to her nor could I accuse myself of injuring her even in thought.

“ Eager to oblige her, I was only studious to promote her pleasure and satisfaction, and if by chance an uneasy thought disturbed the natural serenity of her soul, I was uneasy in my endeavours to compose her to peace, and to chase away the unwelcome reflection which had acted in opposition to her happiness.

“ These proofs of my affectionate regard, which every where presented themselves to my memory, made it impossible for me to account for her behaviour: I was farful that some busy person, envious of the felicity I
was

was in possession of, had poisoned her mind with relations, which, however improbable, it might be difficult for me to persuade her of the falshood of, and the more so, as I was entirely ignorant of the place to which she had retired.

“ Unprovided with the means of arming against the attacks of want, she had left me, unaccountably left me, whilst I, bathed in sorrow and rendered almost desperate by my misfortune, continued to lament a circumstance, the cause of which I was altogether unacquainted with.

“ As I was altogether unsuccessful in my attempts, I resolved to devote the remainder of my life to retirement, with the intention of learning whether or not solitude had charms in itself sufficient to make me forget the violence of a passion which was only increased by the absence of the object which had first inspired it.

“ With this intention, I paid a visit to an old acquaintance a few miles from town to consult him upon a determination of that sort, as I well knew he would give me his advice with the open sincerity of a friend.

“ I found his family in affliction for the death of an only son, who, I was informed, had fallen a sacrifice to a passion he had conceived for a lady who resided with his mother.

“ Notwithstanding the misfortune this lady had innocently been the cause of, his parents were exceedingly lavish in their encomiums on her: they spoke of her as a composition of all the virtues and graces united, as something more than mortal; and as one who, to the perfection of nature, added every refinement of art and education.

“ The near resemblance this picture bore to my lost Louisa, made me rather curious to see one whose praises I had been a silent evidence of, but learnt to my utter disappointment, that she was then so much indisposed that she was incapable of leaving her apartment.

“ Mr. Hilton, the gentleman to whom my visit was directed, would not suffer me to depart without first promising to pass some days occasionally with him, for the purpose of weaning me from the remembrance of my

my misfortunes, and assisting him in conquering the affliction which the death of his son had occasioned.

" This, though not without reluctance, I consented to, and taking my leave for the present I returned home.

" In a few days, having settled my affairs and discharged those servants for whom I had no longer any occasion, I repeated my visit to Mr. Hilton, who received me with a reservedness which greatly alarmed me. The freedom of his former reception, and the warmth with which he enforced the invitation he had given me, made me unable to account for so sudden a change in his behaviour, and induced me to wish I had not troubled him with my company, apparently so unwelcome.

" I had not been many minutes alone with Mr. Hilton, before he addressed himself to me in much the following manner :

" The intimacy which has so long subsisted betwixt us, makes me extremely uneasy whenever I am constrained to hear any thing which contains an impeachment of your honour. I hope, however, that you will be able to justify yourself from the allegations contained in this letter, which if true, must greatly injure you in the estimation of every honest man, and make you doubly deserving of every punishment due to the criminality of your conduct."

" Astonished at this address, and unable to form a tolerable conjecture touching the meaning thereof, I took the letter which he offered me, and to my utter surprize immediately perceived it to be the hand-writing of my lost Louisa.

" Ah, Sir !" said I, " where is she ?—Where is my Louisa ? Let me but fly to her and convince her of my innocence, and I will bless your charity !"

" To this exclamation he returned no other answer, than by bidding me peruse the epistle he had presented me with.

" This I instantly did, and found that she still persisted in a general accusation, without even naming a circumstance which might lead me to the knowledge of the crime of which she supposed me guilty.

" Ah then !" said I, " the lady who possessed your son's affections, was no other than my Louisa !—

" Gracious

“ Gracious Heaven ! What sin have I committed that
 “ should so far cut me off from all hopes of forgive-
 “ ness ? What have I attempted even in thought, that
 “ should raise so indissoluble a bar betwixt me and
 “ mercy ? — But I humbly bend myself beneath the
 “ rod, fully persuaded that she will yet one time or
 “ other do me the justice to acknowledge, that I never
 “ swerved from the duty I owed her as her husband ;
 “ never injured her even in idea, and was ever desirous
 “ only of increasing her happiness.”

“ The sincerity which marked my behaviour contributed more than any thing to convince Mr. Hilton of my innocence, and he apologized for the severity of his former conduct towards me, by imputing it to the mutual regard he entertained for us both, and the reluctance with which he heard any circumstance which tended to impeach the rectitude of my principles.

“ I thanked him for the frankness with which he had treated me, and begged his advice in what manner I had best proceed.

“ All our determinations however were fruitless, as we found it impossible to collect the least intelligence respecting her, and I was obliged to wait in patient expectation of what time might produce in my favour.

“ Mrs. Hilton, who had been exceedingly indisposed from the period of her son’s illness, and who, by the elopement of Louisa had received a second shock little inferior to the former, grew every day worse and worse.

“ Her husband attended her with the care of a true and faithful friend, and scarcely ever forsook her in her affliction. Collected in herself, she waited patiently the hour of her dissolution, which approached near at hand, and which she beheld with a fortitude and resignation which did honour to Christianity.

“ Finding her end approach, she sent for me to her bedside, and joining in a short prayer for the protection and safety of my Louisa, she delivered me her picture richly ornamented, which she desired me to present to my wife, if ever Fate should bless me with the sight of her, as a token of her esteem and invariable affection.

“ This proof of her regard I considered as a prediction

lection in my favour, and that time would yet bring about a reunion, which I ardently prayed for as the most darling wish of my heart.

"As I am possessed of a small estate in Gloucestershire, Mr. Hilton advised me to go down there for the purpose of retiring from scenes which could not fail of materially affecting me.

"Himself he proposed as a companion of my solitude, a proposal which I was greatly pleased with, as the familiarity in our misfortunes rendered us fit company only for ourselves, and promised to afford us the means of diverting each other from the reflections which are too apt to intrude on the mind of the sorrowful.

"We have continued in this retirement ever since, unknown to ambition and only anxious to promote each other's satisfaction.

"The only person who visited us was Mr. Jarvis, who has known me from my infancy. I however never returned his civilities, as I was fearful that I should by that means too much break in upon the plan which I had laid down, of avoiding as much as possible all communication with the world.

"Drawn by an irresistible impulse, and for which I was unable to account, I was easily persuaded by the gentleman to whom I this morning had the pleasure of proving serviceable, to accompany him hither.

"The blessings I have received thereby, I gratefully impute to the inexhaustible goodness of that Being who in his own time produces events which utterly transcend our contracted ideas, and leave us in admiration of that wisdom we are unable to comprehend."

C H A P. XIX.

A School for Peers. The Arrival of an old Friend and Benefactor. The Pleasure arising from extending Help to the Neccessitous. The Tears of Sensibility, and a Separation, which brings this Work to a Conclusion.

MR. Gilbert having concluded his narrative, M. Clayton congratulated him on so happy a termination to his misfortunes. He assured him how exceedingly satisfied he was with the choice his daughter

ter had made, which so infinitely exceeded his expectations, that he was at a loss for words whereby properly to express his approbation.

Ceremoniously joining their hands he gave them his blessing, which they received with that religious awe and reverence which alone actuate those hearts which are acquainted with the force of paternal authority.

As every one seemed now to be perfectly satisfied with what Fate had bestowed upon him, Mr. Lloyd, who was not altogether untinged with the natural pride of his countrymen, asked Mr. Clayton why he neglected to avail himself of the advantages fortune had lavished upon him, in having given him title, rank, and precedence, neither of which he made the least use of?

"Because," replied the father of Louisa, "I wish not to deduce to myself any merit from what has been merely the production of accident.

"Ennobled in itself, if accompanied by Virtue, the human soul can borrow no ornament from title: on the contrary, rank and precedence, the boast of heraldry and the pomp of power, can confer no honour on him who is a stranger to that dignity of action which surpasses idle ceremony, and which is only to be found in the hearts of those who boast intrinsic merit."

"But surely," said Mr. Lloyd, "those upon whom such honours are conferred, owe something to their families who have an undoubted right to partake in the advantages arising from circumstances, which, however immaterial in themselves, are nevertheless what essentially contribute to fix and excite the awe of the vulgar.

"Believe me, my friend, there is more value in those things of which you speak so lightly, than you are aware of. It is not sufficient that a man is possessed of dignities,—it is equally necessary that the world should know it: the generality of mankind estimate every thing by its outward appearance; the respect which they pay to their superiors is only caused by motives of interest, and is regulated according to the quality of the person to whom their devoirs are addressed."——

"And

“ And shall I,” said Mr. Clayton interrupting him,
 “ shall I, for the paltry consideration of arrogating to
 “ myself honours of which I am not certified that I am
 “ deserving, expose myself to the follies and the impositions of the mean and the artful? Shall I suffer myself to be deluded out of my reason by fulsome adulation, merely because my relations challenge a right in those dignities which they may probably only degrade? No, Sir, be assured that I esteem the character of an honest man as a title infinitely preferable to any that can be conferred by kings, and believe him to be most noble who is most virtuous.”

Finding he could make no impression upon him, Mr. Lloyd relinquished every farther attempt of exciting his friend's ambition, and permitted him to indulge his unfashionable notions as he himself thought proper.—

Mr. Gilbert, who naturally concluded that Mr. Hilton would be uneasy at his long absence, dispatched a servant to that gentleman with a short note, for the purpose of allaying any apprehensions a circumstance so extraordinary might occasion.

The note was conceived in the following terms :

“ By the strangest accident in the world I have at
 “ last recovered what I have so long been sighing for
 “ the possession of my Louisa ! if you would with to
 “ complete my happiness accompany the bearer, who
 “ will bring you to

— “ your joyfull friend,

“ WILLIAM GILBERT.”

As the messenger had but a short half hour's ride, he presently returned and with him, Mr. Hilton.

“ Where is she?—Where is she?” said he the moment he entered,—“ convey me to her, that I may
 “ once more hear the sound of *her* voice who next to
 “ heaven possesses my affection !”

“ Here behold her,” replied Mrs. Gilbert, “ happy
 “ in the idea of being restored to the embraces of her
 “ friend and benefactor !”

Scarce had she concluded this sentence before she threw herself into his arms with an unreservedness which, whoever it may be condemned by prudery, was nevertheless such as gratitude and virtue crowned with the strictest approbation.

“ Ah !”

“ Ah!” exclaimed Mr. Hilton, “ it is indeed my
 “ Louisa, my long lost daughter, for such I cannot help
 “ calling her. By what wonderful means was this dis-
 “ covery effected? By what blessed event is she re-
 “ stored to the sight of him who rejoices in her re-
 “ covery, and who is only anxious to learn the happy
 “ instrument which produces her to his embrace?”

In conformity to this request, Mr. Gilbert related the accident that brought about an explanation upon which so materially depended the peace and happiness of the different parties concerned, and which, by clearing up some important mistakes, had terminated to the mutual satisfaction of every one.

“ It is the work of the Almighty!” said Mr. Hilton at the conclusion of the relation with which he had been favoured— “ It is the work of the Almighty! “ ever watchful for our good, he has providentially
 “ brought about an event at a time when we least ex-
 “ pected it, which once more opens to us the path of
 “ happiness, and shews us that he chastens those only
 “ whom he loves.”

Mr. Clayton, who was greatly pleased with this visit, and who from Mrs. Gilbert’s account had conceived a flattering idea of Mr. Hilton’s character, now introduced himself to that gentleman and thanked him for the humanity he had exercised towards his daughter at a time when her distresses so immediately call for a friend and protector.

Ignorant as Mr. Hilton was of the near relationship which subsisted betwixt Mr. Clayton and Louisa, he however acquitted himself with a sincerity and politeness which at once did honour to his feelings and education.

“ I know not, Sir,” said he, “ why the world in
 “ general should wonder at hearing of the performance
 “ of a generous action: it is a melancholy evidence of
 “ the decay of virtue among them, and a fatal proof
 “ that they no longer regard that great precept of
 “ Christianity which requires them to do unto others
 “ as they would be done unto.

“ What greater satisfaction can a liberal mind ex-
 “ perience, than that of assisting his fellow creatures
 “ in their necessities? What can afford more grateful
 “ sensations

“ sensations to the human heart than when commiserating with
 “ the children of affliction, in soothing their sorrows and in reliev-
 “ ing their distresses?—

“ And yet how apt are mankind to express their astonishment,
 “ when they bear witness to actions which are nothing more than
 “ the duty of every one, and which they too often evidence with-
 “ out possessing a wish to imitate!

“ The trifling assistance I afforded Louisa was drawn from me
 “ by a thorough conviction that she wanted it, and was at the
 “ same time deserving thereof. I arrogate to myself no merit
 “ therefrom, and am only sorry that the virtues of hospitality are
 “ not less admired and more practised.”

Mr Clayton, who had often lamented the extreme scarcity of
 characters so exemplary, was exceedingly rejoiced at meeting with
 one whose soul bore so strict a conformity to his own: with a sin-
 cerity unquestionable, he solicited the friendship of Mr. Hilton, as
 a treasure of greater value than any that could be bestowed by
 monarchs.

The similarity of their sentiments naturally made way for an
 acquaintance so desirable on every side: founded on the purest
 basis of disinterested honour, a friendship thus formed could not
 fail of answering every expectation, and as they wished, ended
 only with their lives.

A sudden impulse of memory called Mrs. Gilbert to the recol-
 lection of her deceased benefactress Mrs. Hilton, whose kindness
 it was impossible she could ever forget, and whose virtues she ve-
 nerated with unceasing gratitude.

The part she feared she had contributed towards her death, gave
 her the most poignant uneasiness, and saddened every pleasure the
 event of the day had otherwise been productive of.

Every one was eager to comfort her, by administering that balm
 which her wounded peace required, but which however, was a
 considerable time applied without effect.

“ She was my friend and my benefactress,” would she say,
 “ and in return for the most distinguished marks of her kindness,
 “ of which I was undeserving of the minutest part, like a mon-
 “ strous parricide, have I deprived her of life! she who was anx-
 “ ious for my welfare; she who only studied to encrease my hap-
 “ piness; who moved but to bless, and lived but to oblige:—her,
 “ have I ungratefully cut off from every pleasure, shortened her
 “ days, and laid her head in the lap of corruption!

It was with the greatest difficulty Mr. Hilton could persuade
 her to put an end to her lamentations. She a long time remained
 inflexible to his entreaties, and persisted in accusing herself as the
 author of her friend's disease.

Time having, however, somewhat composed the violence of her
 spirits, Mr. Jarvis once more requested Mr. Clayton and Mr.
 Lloyd to come to some determination respecting the fortune which
 remained in his hand of Fanny's.

The former of those two gentlemen, having again repeated his
 resolution of relinquishing every claim to it, Mr. Lloyd informed
 him that a thought had that instant struck him which would re-
 move

move all difficulties arising from an application of the money in question, and promised to be productive of mutual satisfaction to them both

“As I have not a wish,” said he, superior to that of assisting the deserving, and am already confident that you will with pleasure consent to its being applied to the relief of him who is truly necessitous, I will inform you on whom I intend bestowing the trifle which so luckily for my present purpose invites me to the distribution of.

“You cannot but remember the worthy curate to whom I introduced you on the morning in which fortune produced so happy a reconciliation betwixt us, and who so artlessly expressed his regard and affection for his wife.

“On him I wish to bestow the object of contention: he is in every respect deserving of it. equally as a faithful friend and a worthy companion, and more than either, because he is distressed and has a large family.

“I would wish that the money might be laid out in the purchase of a living. Church preferment, I am sorry to remark, is only to be procured by that means: merit may plead, but wealth only prevails. If you approve of my scheme, I think I have a friend who would immediately resign in his favour.”

Mr. Clayton expressed his approbation of what Mr. Lloyd proposed, and desired him to use no delay in raising the honest Curate to an eminence which his merits so justly entitled him to. “He is deserving of it (said he) and I most sincerely wish it may tend to create him all the satisfaction he can wish!”

Every party being now rendered completely happy, an early day was fixed upon for their departure from Jarvis House.

Mr. Jarvis would gladly have had them continue some time longer with him, which however they declined, and began once more to resume the necessary preparations for their journey.

Mr. Gilbert happy in the possession of his lovely bride, determined to continue no longer in that part of the country, but to attend the father of his Louisa into Surry, where he had an estate and where he intended passing the remainder of his days.

There needed not much invitation to prevail on Mr. Hilton to accompany them, that gentleman had contracted so strong a friendship for Mr. Clayton, that they were henceforwards inseparable.

The morning being at length arrived which was to separate them from Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Jarvis, with streaming eyes they took their final leave of those who had shewn them so many kindnesses, and humbly returning thanks to him who had guided him through the labyrinth of perplexity in which they had been so long involved, they prepared themselves to partake of the innocent joys of love and friendship, unmoved by envy and uninterrupted by misfortune.

